

A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL  
E N Q U I R Y  
INTO THE  
Rise, Propagation, Doctrine, Discipline,  
Practice, and Ceremonies  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF ROME:  
IN A SERIES OF  
FAMILIAR DIALOGUES

Between a FATHER and a SON.

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BY JOHN FELLOWS,  
Author of the HISTORY of the HOLY BIBLE in Verse; and  
GRACE TRIUMPHANT, a Poem.

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## P R E F A C E.

**A**T a time when the most destructive errors of the Romish Church are without any restraint propagating in this kingdom; when learned men are sent from foreign countries to spread the pernicious poison of Rome among the common people; when Popish chapels are erecting in so many parts of this metropolis; and every art, both of persuation and interest, is used by the agents of Rome to spread their abhorred superstition, it is sincerely lamented by the friends of the Reformation, that no able advocate hath appeared in defence of the Protestant Cause.

The silence of our learned divines at such an alarming crisis, will doubtless be taken advantage of by the enemies of our religion, and represented as though we were unable to defend our principles; and the weak and unwary will be ensnared by that

insinuating sophistry, with which the friends and advocates of the Roman Catholic superstition endeavour to spread their dangerous and destructive errors.

At such a time as this, it is certainly a duty incumbent on all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and know the power and spirituality of his religion, to unite in one continued exertion of their abilities, to stop the rapid progress of that contagion, which, if suffered to overspread the land, will deprive us of our dearest rights and privileges, and make the rising generation most deplorably miserable.

Let us not then give the enemy an opportunity to take the advantage of our supineness: let us all exert ourselves to the utmost on this great occasion: and let children's children be taught the grounds of our separation from the Church of Rome.

In a nation where the Holy Scriptures are in the hands of every individual, and the  
gospel

gospel publicly preached, one would think there could be no possibility of propagating religious sentiments so manifestly repugnant thereto. Nor can it easily be supposed, that a nation which, for two centuries, has enjoyed the sweets of liberty, would again bow the neck to that intolerable yoke under which their forefathers have groaned. But if we consider the depravity of human nature, and the luxury and dissipation which prevail in the present age, especially amongst the great; and if we consider how far Divine Providence may deliver this kingdom up to a spirit of delusion for their manifold sins, we have reason to be alarmed. Nor ought it to be overlooked, that a religion which pretends to take persons to heaven without parting with their vices, is too likely to gain admittance in an age when all sorts of wickedness are carried to their most extravagant and abominable height.

It is sincerely to be lamented, that Protestants are not more apprehensive of the danger. Have they forgot the reign of

bloody Queen Mary! Have they forgot the fires in Smithfield, and the righteous cause in which our fathers died! Do they not know what sort of men they have to deal with! Do they know how many Roman Catholic schools there are in this kingdom! Do they know how many Popish chapels! Do they know how many Roman Catholic Priests and Jesuits! Do they know how many Roman Catholics! Will not they consider! Will they not be alarmed! Will they sleep in the day, and let the enemy sow his most destructive tares without opposition? However supine and careless the Protestants are; however the wise virgins may slumber and sleep; however unwilling to be awaked, they are to be informed that the enemy is all life and spirit, and with the most unremitting vigilance is striving to undermine their religion. Will they believe, that, at this very time, the Roman Catholics are applying to the poor in this kingdom for leave to educate their children; and, the more effectually to gain their consent in this matter, they treat them with  
uncommon



uncommon kindness, give them money to supply their necessities, and promise them the greatest encouragement and support, if they will renounce their religion. What must we expect from the rising generation, if these attempts prevail! And how likely are they to prevail at such a time as this! How kind and condescending the Romish zealots appear! What a shew they make of, superior charity and goodness! What an ostentation of benevolence, and tender compassion for the poor and afflicted! How specious their pretences! How soft and insinuating their address! Popery, it seems, is not now the same as it was in former ages! It is vastly altered since Queen Mary's time! It is now become mild and gentle, full of mercy, and in every respect amiable and lovely! *The Ethiopian has changed his skin, and the leopard his spots!* Such is the account which the agents of Rome spread among the poor of this nation: the beast *appears like a lamb*; but, it is much to be feared, we shall soon hear him *speak like a dragon*.

Whatever

Whatever may be the prevailing notions of the present age, it was the opinion of our forefathers, " That an open toleration of  
" the Popish religion is inconsistent with  
" the safety of a free people and a Pro-  
" testant government." It was thought by them, that every convert to Popery was, by principle, an enemy to the constitution of his country; and as it was supposed, that the Roman Catholic religion promoted rebellion against the state, there was a very severe law made to prevent the propagation of it. The words of the statute are these—*All persons pretending to have power, who shall absolve, persuade, or withdraw any of the Queen's subjects from the religion now established, to the Romish religion, or move them to promise obedience to the See of Rome, being thereof lawfully convicted, shall suffer as in case of high treason.—And if any person, after the end of this parliament, be willingly absolved or withdrawn as aforesaid, or willingly be reconciled, or shall promise any obedience to any pretended prince, potentates, or usurped authority*

*authority from Rome, then every such person, their procurers and counsellors, being thereof lawfully convicted, shall be taken, tried, and judged, and shall suffer as in cases of high treason. 23 Eliz. chap. 1.*

Such was the law which the wisdom of our forefathers, who had smarted by the sting of the old dragon, thought fit to enact, to prevent the propagation of those pompous soul-deceiving errors which are now prevailing amongst us; and if it proves, by the event, that the present age is more wise, we shall have reason to rejoice. Our ancestors had the most dreadful apprehensions of the tyranny of Rome, and the deplorable condition this kingdom would be reduced to, if ever that religion should prevail amongst us; and why should we have such a conceit of our superior wisdom, as to conclude, that our rights and liberties are in no danger? It rather becomes us to be cautious and diffident, and not depend too much on our pretended superiority of knowledge. Let us reverence the wisdom of our ancestors;

cestors; let us follow their steps; let us be circumspect and wary; let us imitate their prudence, and heartily join them in the pious form of prayer which was appointed by parliament for the fifth of November, before it was altered by Archbishop Laud—  
*Be thou still, O Lord! our mighty Protector, and scatter our cruel enemies which delight in blood; infatuate their counsels, and root out that Babylonish and Anti-christian sect which say of Jerusalem, Down with it, Down with it to the ground—And to that end, strengthen the hands of our gracious King, the nobles, and magistrates of the land, with judgment and justice, to cut off those workers of iniquity, whose religion is rebellion, whose faith is faction, whose practice is murdering of souls and bodies; and so root them out of the confines and limits of this kingdom, that they may never prevail against us, and triumph in the ruins of thy church; and give us grace by true and serious repentance to avert these and the like judgments from us, for thy dear Son's sake, our only mediator and advocate. Amen.*

*bequeathed to the poor of the parish of St. Martin in the year 1688.*



It must be confessed, that the Divine Spirit only can enlighten the eyes and affect the hearts of men, to understand the nature, and know the power of real religion: but that Spirit makes use of human means, as well as the divine word, both to enlighten the understanding and affect the heart; and almost all the doctrines of the Romish Church are so absurd in themselves, so contrary to the reason of man, and opposite to our natural notions of the Divine Perfections, that they need only be seen in order to be abhorred.

The author of this work has been long solicited to undertake something of this kind, but declined the task, expecting to see the subject treated by an abler hand; but as nothing of consequence has appeared, he is no longer able to resist the importunities of his friends: and he hopes this attempt will be successful in setting the Romish superstition in a plain point of view, and preventing young minds from being corrupted by

by the fair pretences and crafty wiles of those who lie in wait to deceive.

The scarcity of every valuable book written in the last century against the errors of Rome: the little acquaintance the common people of this nation have with the argument, and the apparent need there is of a plain and comprehensive, though short, treatise on this subject, encourage the author to this undertaking: and it is his ardent desire, that the Holy Spirit may bless this attempt; that the eyes of mankind may be opened; that the glorious gospel, in its purity, spirituality, and simplicity, may prevail; that all idolatry, superstition, and every thing which opposes the kingdom of Christ, may be abolished; and this highly-favoured nation delivered from every danger to which she is exposed.

*Church-Lane, Whitechapel,*

J. FELLOWS.

*Dec. 10, 1778.*

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A PAIR

A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL

# ENQUIRY, &c.

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## DIALOGUE THE FIRST.

*The Rise and Fall of Popery predicted in the  
Holy Scriptures.*

FATHER.

**Y**OU seem thoughtful this morning, Son?

SON.

Indeed, Sir, I am so. The contemptible figure I made in conversation last night vexes me prodigiously. I cannot bear my own littleness; nor can I endure the thought, that your goodness has expended so vast a sum on my education, to so little purpose.

FATHER.

Where was the conversation you refer to? and what subject was it upon?

B

SON

2      *Enquiry into the Rise, Propagation, &c.*

S O N.

I was last night at our neighbour M——u's. That gentleman, you know, is a Roman Catholic, but a person of the most amiable temper and regular conduct. I was used with all the politeness that good sense and good breeding could dictate, and all the kindness and apparent sincerity of the most generous friendship. There was a gentleman there whom I took to be a priest; and the conversation turned on religion. He had a great deal to say in defence of the several points of doctrine in which they differ from us, and most pathetically lamented the deplorable condition of the Protestants, because they have revolted from the Romish church, out of which he supposes there can be no salvation.

F A T H E R.

And did not you know how to answer him?

S O N.

Indeed, Sir, I found myself very much embarrassed; for his arguments were such as I do not remember to have heard: and having only a loose and vague notion of the absurdity of the Popish tenets, without having ever entered deeply and closely



closely into the argument, I found myself unable to contend with one, whom I conclude, from his readiness and fluency, to have made it the study of his whole life.

FATHER.

Now I consider the case, I must confess, that your education has been faulty in this particular. An argument of such importance ought not to have been omitted; but certainly you should have been fully acquainted with the grounds of our separation from the Church of Rome, and furnished with such a knowledge of the subject, as might have enabled you to answer their acutest arguments, and see through their specious pretences.

SON.

Indeed, Sir, if you had heard the conversation, I am sure you would not think the Roman Catholics contemptible adversaries to our religion. You would have been surpris'd to have heard what a vein of good sense, what specious arguments, what apparent humility and meekness, what candor and ingenuity, what kindness and condescension, and how much of the gentleman, the philosopher, and in every respect the great man, appeared in the person I am speaking of.

B 2

FATHER.

4 *Enquiry into the Rise, Propagation, &c.*

FATHER.

Why, Son, I am afraid you are half converted to the Popish religion.

SON.

I must confess, Sir, that, while the gentleman was talking, I thought that certainly there must be more in it than I had apprehended; but was resolved to suspend my opinion till I had represented the case to you, and received your instruction and advice. But consider, Sir, if I was so far overcome as to hesitate a moment concerning the truth of the Protestant religion, what must be the consequence when such men, as I have described, fall in the way of the common people, who are not able to discern the various arts which may be used to ensnare them?

FATHER.

The case of the common people, at this time, is really alarming: and it is a duty highly incumbent on our Protestant Divines to take care that, by some proper means, they are instructed into the grounds of our separation from the Romish Church; and the more so, as I have been informed, that great numbers of learned men are sent for from the Popish countries, and commissioned  
from

from Rome, privately to spread the poison of their errors amongst the common people of this kingdom. As to your resolution of suspending your opinion till you have conversed with me, you are certainly in the right. It is your duty to enquire, and mine to give you instruction. And I do not doubt giving you such an account of our religion as will be to your satisfaction.

S O N.

Then, Sir, you will permit me to ask, what is your opinion of the Church of Rome?

F A T H E R.

My opinion of the Church of Rome, in general, is, that it is the great corruption of the Christian Religion—that by it, the life, power, purity, and spirituality of the gospel are taken away, and a parcel of Heathenish trumpery introduced in their stead—that its various tenets are particularly calculated to aggrandize the priesthood, and delude and enslave the common people—that it breathes nothing but bloodshed and slaughter, revenge and fury, against those who dissent from it—that it encourages vice and immorality, and is in every respect hurtful and destructive to mankind.

B 3

S O N.

8 *Enquiry into the Rise, Propagation, &c.*

SON.

This is an heavy charge indeed. But are not you prejudiced, Sir?

FATHER.

Depend not on my opinion, but hear the language of inspiration. There was a prevailing notion amongst some of the primitive Christians, in the time of the apostles, That the day of the Lord was at hand, and the second coming of Christ soon to be expected. To convince them of this mistake, the great apostle Paul thus writes to the Thessalonians, 2d Epist. chap. ii. *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED, THE SON OF PERDITION! who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you I*  
told



*told you of these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. Then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and overwhelm with the brightness of his coming; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness.*

S O N.

Has this passage of scripture a direct and immediate reference to the Romish Pontiff?

F A T H E R.

There has no person arisen since the time of the apostles, who has gained such unbounded power, assumed such high pretensions, and set up such an authority both in temporals and spirituals, as the Pope of Rome. And whoever considers, with attention, the titles he assumes, the reverence, worship, and obedience he requires, with the wicked arts which were used, and the lying wonders which were invented and propagated at first to gain, and afterwards to support  
that

8 *Enquiry into the Rise, Propagation, &c.*

that boundless power, must acknowledge, that the above prediction is almost literally fulfilled in his impious and arbitrary usurpation.

S O N.

What are the titles he assumes?

F A T H E R.

He pretends to be the successor of St. Peter, and from him to have derived a divine right to rule the whole Christian world. He assumes the titles of—the Vicar of Christ upon earth—the Prince of the Apostles—the supreme Head of the Church—and the infallible Guide to Salvation. He *exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped*, by presuming to alter the institutions of Christ, and set up a worship of his own in opposition thereto. He pretendeth to sit in the temple of God, claiming universal worship, and grasping at a vast and unbounded dominion over the minds, as well as the bodies and estates, of mankind; a dominion, of all that ever was formed, the most wide and extensive, which knows no other bounds than those of the earth; and not confined even to the limits of the world, since these exalted princes claim to themselves all power in heaven, as well as on earth, all power over,

over the dead as well as the living. *His coming was after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and all the deceivableness of unrighteousness.* For the most infernal policy and craft were used, the most diabolical cruelty practised, the most impudent and abominable lies invented, and the most incredible stories of wonderful miracles propagated, in order to establish this unrighteous dominion over the persons and consciences of mankind.

S O N.

I do not remember to have observed the passage of scripture you have quoted; but I must confess, it seems very minutely to describe such a power as you have mentioned. Yet I can scarcely believe, that the Religion, which is described to be so mild and gentle, and every way friendly to mankind, is so very bad as you apprehend.

F A T H E R.

The Roman Catholics of our day would fain persuade us, that their Religion is mild and gentle, and every way friendly to mankind. But if we look back to the history of past ages, we shall find it the most subtle, false, and deceitful; the most haughty, assuming, and arrogant; the most tyrannical

tyrannical and oppressive; and the most cruel, blood-thirsty, and destructive power that ever curst the earth.

S O N.

I should be very glad, Sir, if you would take the trouble to inform me of some of the most obvious and glaring of the particulars you refer to. I very much desire to know something of the Rise of this extravagant and destructive Power, and of the particular Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome.

F A T H E R.

I shall take pleasure in your information: for certainly it is my duty to use my utmost endeavours to prevent your falling into such a snare, or embracing such a combination of the most dangerous and destructive errors.

S O N.

Are there no more texts of scripture which describe the rise and extent of the Papal Power?

F A T H E R.

There is a very minute and magnificent description of this unbounded usurpation, and of the



the grandeur, glory, destructive influence, the various abominations and infernal cruelty of the Church of Rome, in the 17th chapter of the Revelations. And there came one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name, written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration,

SON.

S O N.

Can it be proved, that by this woman is meant the Church of Rome?

F A T H E R.

If we examine this description, we shall find it so full and clear, so minute and expressive, that there will be no room to question it. The Church of Rome is here represented as a *Woman*, and a harlot, because she pretends to be the bride of Christ, but is none of his, being debauched by the grandeur and wickedness of the world. *She sits upon a scarlet coloured beast*, denoting her dominion and power, as well as the scarlet robes worn by the Pope and Cardinals. The beast was *full of names of blasphemy*, alluding to the blasphemous pretences on which the Papal authority is founded. *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls*; alluding to the riches, splendor, glory, grandeur, and magnificence of the Romish superstition. *The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication*; descriptive of the extent of the Romish dominion amongst the nations, the impious idolatry of their worship, the wicked connivance of the superiors of that Church at the vices

vices of great men, and the insinuating scenes of delusion which have been practised to deceive the common people. *She held in her hand a golden cup, full of abomination, and filthiness of her fornication*; referring to those most abominable scenes of lewdness and debauchery practised in private by the devotees of that Church, while they pretend to have separated themselves from mankind for the practice of piety, and maintaining the most unfulfilled chastity and purity of life.

S O N.

Indeed it must be confessed, that there is a strong and striking resemblance; and, if the particulars you refer to, are true, I cannot see how the advocates of the Church of Rome can evade the force of this passage of scripture.

F A T H E R.

If we consider the remaining part of this representation, we shall find the likeness so strong, that, one would think, every body must know who the picture was drawn for. *And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.* She wears her character on her face, and though it be

known,

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known, that she commits the most horrid abominations, *she hath a whore's forehead, and refuseth to be ashamed.* Her doctrines are full of *mystery*, and she hath by her artifice arisen to the most stupendous greatness. Justly may she be called *the mother of harlots*; fornication in her account, is a venial sin; and prostitution is established by public authority at Rome: and in her hath been practised every *abomination of the earth.* The apostle and evangelist adds, *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* Can any thing be more strikingly descriptive than this. The professed doctrine of Rome, is the lawfulness of putting heretics to death. All are heretics in her estimation, who dissent from her in any one article of her superstition. How many millions of lives have been sacrificed under this pretence! What cruelties have been practised! What seas of blood have been shed! What assassinations! What murders! What massacres! My heart shudders at a scene so shocking to humanity.

S O N.

If these things are to be proved from authentic history, I think it may very safely be concluded, that the Church of Rome is the mystery Babylon of the Revelation.

FATHER.



## FATHER.

If we attend to the angel's explanation, I cannot see any reason to doubt it: there is no necessity to go through the whole, I shall only refer you to two articles, which sufficiently prove the point, *The seven heads of the beast, said the angel, are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth;* and it is known that the city of Rome is built upon seven hills. But let us remark the conclusion of this explanation, *And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.* Rome, at the time the Revelation of St. John was written, was the seat of empire, the mistress of the world: her dominion was wide, and extended itself over the earth. *The waters which thou sawest, where the woman sitteth,* said the angel, *are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.* Rome had extended her dominion over the neighbouring kingdoms, and there was no power on earth that was able to contend with her. And as there was no other city that reigned over the kings of the earth, it is certain, that Rome must be the city here referred to.

## SON.

I am really surprised at the exactness of this representation. What the Roman Catholics have

to say on this head, I cannot tell; but it seems to me that your reference is just. But I observe that the angel explains *the ten horns of the beast to be ten kings, who shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.*

FATHER.

This refers to that happy time, which every real Christian wishes to see, when the Lord by his holy spirit shall enlighten the eyes of men, and not only illuminate their understandings, but affect their hearts: when Christ shall take to himself his mighty power, and reign in the hearts of his people; when the pure simplicity of his gospel shall prevail; and every thing which exalts itself against the power and glory of his spiritual kingdom, *shall be consumed with the spirit of his mouth, and overwhelmed with the brightness of his coming.*

SON.

Then there is a time expected, when the Roman Catholic superstition will be at an end.

FATHER.

Yes: it is the opinion of our Protestant divines that Rome is destined soon to fall, and great will be

be the fall thereof. It is supposed, that the nations who have been so long enslaved by the Papal power, and blinded by their superstition, will be enlightened by the Divine Spirit, and converted by the power of real religion. Being thus inspired by the Divine Spirit, with an hatred to error, and love to truth, the kings of the earth will unite to put an end to all idolatry and superstition, and restore the pure simplicity of the gospel of Christ. And it is supposed, that some peculiar and distinguished vengeance will fall on the friends and supporters of the Papal power, and on that great city which is the seat of their unrighteous dominion. Read Revelation, chap. xviii. *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers*

C 3

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*partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewardeth you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore, shall her plagues come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

S O N.

If this passage hath reference to the Church of Rome, great is her wickedness indeed! and dreadful will be her fall! But when is it supposed, this terrible and awful, tho' desirable event will happen?

F A T H E R.

There is certainly an appointed time for the fall, as there was for the rise, of the Antichristian power. But it is not for us to know the times and the seasons. It is hoped by good men, that the Lord will soon appear, and manifest the glory of his person, and the power of his truth in the conviction



conviction or destruction of all that exalt themselves against him, and dare to oppose his gospel. But let the time be near, or more remote, the destruction of Antichrist is certain; and when it comes, will be sudden and irrecoverable. Rev. xviii. 21. *And a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great milstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. Then with exaltation and joy, will it be said, Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.*

**End of Dialogue I.**

## DIALOGUE THE SECOND.

*Of the Rise of Popery, and the extravagant and unbounded Power and Authority of the Popes.*

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SON.

I Have carefully considered the subject of our last conversation, and diligently examined the passages of scripture you referred me to : and according to the account you gave of the Church of Rome, it seems very plain that those scriptures allude to the rise and fall of that impious, assuming, arbitrary, tyrannical, and oppressive power. But as at that time you gave only a general account, I shall be much obliged, Sir, if you will condescend so far as to descend to particulars, and give me a clear view of the several branches of that superstition.

FATHER.

I am very glad, Son, to find you of an ingenuous and inquisitive temper. A thirst after knowledge,  
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and a diligent and steady enquiry after truth, are commendable in all, but more especially so in young persons. It is very true, I gave you but a very short and general account of Popery; and I am fully satisfied that the more largely and closely we view her, and the more minutely and diligently we enquire, the more abominable, odious, and destructive she will appear.

S O N.

If you please, Sir, we will at this time enquire into the rise and progress of the prodigious all-controlling authority and power of the Romish Pontiffs. The Roman Catholics say, that the Protestant religion can boast no earlier an original than the time of Henry the eighth.

F A T H E R.

Considered as the Protestant religion, it can boast no earlier an original, because it derives its name from the Protest of an Assembly of Divines against the errors of Popery. But considered as the religion of Jesus Christ, it derives its original from him, and was taught and propagated by his apostles. The religion of Jesus, in its purity, spirituality, and simplicity, had been corrupted by

the overgrown and overbearing tyranny of the Church of Rome. The purple Pontiff had risen to the most unbounded dominion, and effectually employed his wicked arts to put out the eyes of mankind. *Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people*, when the Lord was pleased to light up the glorious reformation, by displaying the wickedness, tyranny, idolatry, and superstition of the Church of Rome, and spreading the truth, simplicity, and spirituality of the Gospel of Christ through several nations; and hence came the Protestant religion.

S O N.

And from what period are we to date the original of the Romish power?

F A T H E R.

It is not to be supposed, that the prodigious power and extensive dominion of the Church of Rome was assumed all at once; it was the work of ages, and rose by degrees to the greatest grandeur and magnificence, the greatest authority and power, joined with the greatest tyranny and oppression the world ever groaned under. The bishops of Rome rose to that insolence of power as



to lord it over the emperors. They boasted a right of setting up kings, and dethroning them at pleasure; a right of calling them to account for their actions, absolving their subjects from their allegiance, divesting them of their dominions, and treating them in every respect as their slaves.

The foundation of this unjust and cruel dominion was laid by Boniface the third, about six hundred years after the birth of Christ: and it was carried to its greatest height, insolence, and power, by Gregory the seventh; which was near five hundred years after. There were one hundred and fourteen Popes between the two above mentioned. The usurpation was carried on all this time: some Popes gaining more ground, others less; but not one lost an inch of what his predecessor had acquired.

SON.

What was the state of the Christian Church before the beginning of this usurpation?

FATHER.

From the times of the apostles till the reign of the emperor Constantine, which began in the year 312, the different branches of the Christian church

## 24 Enquiry into the Rise, Propagation, &c.

church were governed by Bishops. The first of these were ordained by the apostles themselves and there was no superiority amongst them. The dignity of a bishop, in this early age of the church, was no more than a pastor; and the orders of the clergy no more than bishops, presbyters, and deacons. The presbyters were priests that assisted the bishops in the discharge of the several branches of their office; and the business of the deacons was to take care of the poor. During this happy period, each church was free and independent; one church claimed no authority or jurisdiction over another. The bishops in the three first centuries are described by historians to be good men, chosen to their office by the people, and answering to the character laid down by St. Paul: *blameless as the stewards of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no strikers, not given to filthy lucre; but lovers of hospitality, lovers of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word, as they had been taught, and able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.* The church during this period, though rich in faith, was poor in this world, and grievously persecuted by the Pagan emperors. There were thirty-two bishops of Rome, before the ecclesiastical hierarchy was formed.

formed. They were in general men poor in spirit, simple in heart, strangers to covetousness and ambition, diligent in the duties of their office, lovers of Jesus Christ, lovers of immortal souls, stedfast in the faith, and great numbers of them sealed the testimony which they bore to the truth with their blood.

## S O N.

What were the persecutions which the church suffered in the three first centuries?

## F A T H E R.

The church in this period suffered ten severe, terrible, and bloody persecutions, which were raised and supported by ten Roman emperors. The first of these persecutions was raised by Nero, in the year 66; the second by Domitian in the year 94; the third by Trajan in 105; the fourth by Antonine in 164; the fifth by Septimus Severus in 205; the sixth by Maximinus in 235; the seventh by Decius in 251; the eighth by Valerian in 255; the ninth by Aurelian in 270; and the tenth by Dioclesian in 303. During this time, the hardships which the Christians suffered, and the frequent martyrdoms amongst them, excited them to cleave together in love. They had no

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opportunity

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opportunity of amassing the riches of the world; they sought not its honors, but, as it is pathetically described by the apostle Paul concerning the worthies of old, some were put to death by the most cruel tortures, *not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.* Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented.

S O N.

At what time, and by what means was the ecclesiastical dominion obtained?

F A T H E R.

Constantine having overcome, and utterly defeated, the usurper and tyrant Maxentius, in the year 312, he soon after published an edict by which the Christians were allowed the free exercise of their religion: and that Prince himself being converted to Christianity, and, the riches of the world flowing into the Church, the pure simplicity of the gospel soon began to decline; for in the reign of Constantine, a number of archbishops were



were raised, by which the bishops of Rome obtained a dominion over the Churches which were contained in ten provinces; but did not aspire to an universal authority over the Christian world, till about three hundred years after this time. But an ecclesiastical authority being thus assumed, the spirit and purity of the gospel began to decline; worldly grandeur, riches, and pleasures were sought after; the spirit of unity and love amongst Christians began to abate; various contentions arose, and various unchristian customs and practices began to creep in, which at length prepared the seat for antichrist.

S O N.

I think you said, that Boniface the third first assumed the sovereignty of the Bishop of Rome over the rest of the archbishops.

F A T H E R.

That prelate, about the year 606 of the Christian era, by flattering the emperor Phocas obtained of him a decree in favor of the supremacy of the See of Rome. This emperor was an usurper, a murderer, and the most detested tyrant. He obtained the empire by the murder of the emperor Mauritius, his lawful sovereign, and the mas-

face of his six children, and all his friends and relations. But, for his indulgence to the ambitious views of the prelate, he was stiled a pious and religious prince, and his image was set up in a place of worship at Rome. At the same time, though he obtained the throne by such means, his advancement was ascribed to a particular providence.

S O N.

How many archbishops of Rome were there before the supremacy was obtained?

F A T H E R.

From Sylvester the first archbishop of Rome, to Boniface the third, who obtained the supremacy by a grant from the emperor, were thirty-three archbishops. The period of time between these two prelates was 293 years, and during this time, various heathen customs and corrupt practices were introduced into the church.

S O N.

What were those corruptions of true religion?

F A T H E R.

It was in the reign of Constantine the Great that the ecclesiastical dominion was first formed

That emperor being converted to Christianity, the Pagan superstition and idolatry, which had prevailed till this time, was abolished; and the Christian religion advanced in its stead, and supported by the emperors. The common people were closely attached to the ceremonies of their old religion, and the bishops and emperors, in order to please the vulgar, and make Christianity the more agreeable to them, admitted the introduction of such practices as rendered the Christian religion as much like the Pagan as possible. The Pagans had magnificent temples: hence grand and sumptuous edifices were raised, and stiled Christian churches. The Pagans dedicated their temples to their deities: the Christians dedicated their churches to their saints. The Pagans in their temples set up and worshipped the images of their gods: the Christians did the same by their saints; and the number of these soon exceeded that of the whole rabble of heathen deities. The Pagans appointed certain stated times of the year for the festivals of their gods: the Christians knew how fond the vulgar were of their feasts and revels; and, in conformity hereto, appointed the festivals of their saints. The Pagan religion was the most grand, sumptuous, and magnificent, that can be imagined: the Christians set up a worship full of

pomp and shew; and, as their religion increased in external magnificence, it declined in inward spirituality and power.

**S O N.**  
I am very much surprised to hear, that Christian bishops should conform so far to the abominations of the heathen. But what erroneous principles were advanced in the period we are speaking of?

**F A T H E R.**

The reading of the scriptures began to be prohibited to the common people; the marriage of priests forbidden; the relics of saints to be held in high estimation; a monastic life highly applauded; and, at the end of the fifth century, purgatory was thought of.

**S O N.**  
Was it only on the foundation of a grant from the emperor, that the Popes founded their prerogative?

**F A T H E R.**  
On this foundation, that prerogative first was claimed: but the successors of Boniface, thirsting



ing after power, and thinking it unsafe to hold their dignity by so precarious a tenure, as the favor of the emperors (for one might reverse what his predecessor had granted) thought of a method of setting up for themselves, and artfully laid a foundation, which was capable of bearing what the most aspiring and unbounded ambition could desire to lay upon it.

S O N.

What foundation was that?

F A T H E R.

They scorned any longer to depend on the will of the emperor; but thought of a method to set themselves above all the emperors and kings in the earth. They claimed the supremacy of the see of Rome, in consequence of a divine right derived from St. Peter, whom they stiled the chief of the apostles, and the head of the Church. This was a master-piece of policy, and fully answered the end. The grant of the emperor could only give them the supremacy over those churches which had a dependence on the Roman empire; but a divine right derived from Christ, gave them the supremacy over all the Churches in the world.

S O N.

S O N.

And was this usurpation patiently received by the Churches?

F A T H E R.

Two things concurred to establish this vast and unbounded dominion. The profound ignorance of the times, and the matchless policy and cunning of the agents of Rome. It was *in the night while men slept*, while the earth was overspread with the thickest darkness and ignorance, that the grand enemy of mankind sowed those destructive *tares*, which produced all the long train of evils which overspread the Christian world. From the beginning of the seventh century to the reformation, the laity of all ranks were unlearned. It is probable, there were very few that could read: but credulity and superstition, the inseparable companions of ignorance, prevailed over all the earth. The little knowledge which remained in the world was confined to the clergy: and very little was found amongst them. These persons were zealously attached to the interest of the Pope, and used every art to promote it. It was in this period of time, in this long night of darkness, ignorance, credulity, and superstition, that the Popes erected their supremacy on the ruins

ruins of real religion, and introduced maxims and notions so repugnant to the gospel of Christ.

I think you said, that the vast dominion and authority of the Popes of Rome was not assumed all at once.

FATHER.

No: as I observed before, it was the work of ages. It does not seem reasonable to conclude, that they designed at first to run those lengths, or carry the Papal prerogative to that impious and extravagant height which they afterwards gained. They found the plot to take, and the success that attended their pursuit of one claim, encouraged them to advance another.

When this unrighteous claim was first advanced, the Popes did not assume an authority over princes, but submitted to them with humility and meekness. They claimed no right to alter the method of worship, or determine religious disputes, but submitted to the councils which were held for that purpose. They gloried, or pretended to glory, in the humble title of *Servant of servants*; acknowledged themselves servants of the emperors, and waited their will and pleasure.

pleasure, after they were chosen, to take upon them the dignity, or exercise the functions of their office. But towards the end of the eleventh century, how different was their state! They then were vested with, what they called, the plenitude of power both temporal and spiritual; above councils, above kings, and uncontrolled by man. They looked upon themselves as the fountain of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction and authority, and by divine sanction empowered to establish all religious laws and constitutions. They were become Lords and Masters, the most haughty and imperious, the most severe and cruel the world ever groaned under.

S O N.

You say, the Popes at first acknowledged themselves the servants of the emperors; at what period did they claim a temporal jurisdiction?

F A T H E R.

It was Stephen the second who first united the temporal power of the Popes to the spiritual. This Pontiff reigned from 752 to 757. He was the twenty-sixth Pope from Boniface the third. It was the troubles in Italy that gave the Pope an opportunity of gratifying his ambition. The King

of



of the Lombards having conquered several provinces belonging to the Emperor, and having besieged Rome, the Pope applied to Pepin, King of France, and, in the name of St. Peter, begged his assistance. The Pope, by his arts, prevailed with Pepin to arm in his cause, and to promise, that whatever dominions he might recover from the Lombards, he would not restore to the Emperor, but give them to St. Peter; in whose cause, and at whose desire, the Pope made him believe, he entered on the war. Pepin proved successful, and was as good as his word. The Pope, as successor to that apostle, took possession of almost all Italy. Hence he became a temporal prince; and thus joining the sword to the keys, and the crown to the mitre, he raised his throne on the ruins of the empire.

### S O N.

I suppose, when the Popes became temporal princes, and joined the civil power to the ecclesiastical, their empire rose by swift degrees.

### F A T H E R.

They gained by this a vast increase of power, but it was about three hundred years before their dominion rose to its fullest height. During this period,

riod, the Papal power and dignity were constantly increasing. There were eighty-seven Popes from Stephen the second to Gregory the seventh; and one claim was advanced after another, till the Pope was worshipped by emperors and kings, whom he deposed at will, and gave their crowns to whoever he pleased. He set up himself for universal monarch, above every power in things temporal as well as spiritual. The scriptures were prohibited to be read by the common people, and divine worship was performed in an unknown tongue. The gospel of Christ was set aside, and the traditions of the Pope established in its stead. The calendar was filled with the names of saints, whose images were worshipped; and this idolatry was carried to the most extravagant and expensive height. Whole volumes were written of the most incredible and ridiculous miracles; and the most absurd and unaccountable tales, and idle and improbable stories, were imposed on the common people. Purgatory was as much believed in, as if some priest had actually taken a voyage thither; and immense sums were extorted from the laity for prayers for the dead. Marriage was absolutely forbidden to the clergy, and keeping of concubines esteemed more honorable. Various orders of monks and nuns were

were established, and a single life made meritorious. The most horrid persecutions were carried on against all who dared to question the Pope's supremacy, and seas of blood were shed in defence of his unrighteous dominion. The infernal tribunal of the inquisition was erected, and the sovereign Pontiff gloried in nothing more than burning heretics. The Papal chair was filled by men of the most abandoned and dissolute lives; and all manner of abominations were committed by one who pretended to be infallible. The most infernal arts and cruelties were practised to obtain the Papal dignity; and sometimes there were two or three Popes at once. Every thing spiritual was discarded from religion, and the whole worship of God made to consist in passive obedience to the ordinances of the Pope. Dispensations might be had from the Pope for incestuous marriages, and the Pontiff presumed to allow what Christ had forbidden. Indulgences to sin were to be bought for money. Monks were sent to public markets with this precious treasure, who for money paid down would forgive sins already committed, and for money paid down would forgive any sins which a person had a desire to commit.

S O N.

This was a deplorable state of religion indeed. Vast was the power of the Popes, and dreadful was the use they made of it. I think you said, they derived this boasted supremacy from St. Peter; had he any authority or command over the rest of the apostles?

F A T H E R.

If the apostle Peter had assumed any authority over the rest of the apostles, it would have been contrary to the express command of his Master. *The kings of the Gentiles, said the great Redeemer, exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve, Luke xxii. 25.* And, whatever contentions there might be amongst the disciples of Christ about superiority, while they expected a temporal dominion, we find, that after our Lord was risen from the dead, and the apostles, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, were instructed more fully into the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, they all with one accord proceeded to the great work of preaching the gospel, and there was no supremacy amongst them.

S O N.



S O N.

Was Peter in no respect more than another apostle?

F A T H E R.

Let us behold what a striking contrast there is between this great apostle, and those who pretend to be his successors, and derive their authority from him. When he healed the lame man in the temple, he could say, *Silver and gold I have none.* When, by the direction of an angel, he was sent for to the house of Cornelius, he refused to be worshipped: *Stand up,* said he, *I myself also am a man.* When he was blamed by the rest of the apostles for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, he pretended not to have done this by any authority of his own, but by the express command of God. When he writes his epistles, he styles himself, *Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ.* When he exhorts the elders of the churches, it is worthy to be remarked, with what condescending meekness he writes: *The elders which are amongst you,* says he, *I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.*

SON.

S O N.

It would be well if these sovereign Pontiffs would consider and imitate the meekness and humility of that great apostle, whom they pretend to succeed.

F A T H E R.

But how contrary to this is their conduct and character? Instead of being able to make the declaration, *Silver and gold I have none*; they have made it their care, and contrived their religion so, as to amass the riches of the world. Upon a computation made by order of King Henry the third, in the year 1245, it appeared, that more money was carried out of England annually by the Pope's authority, than all the revenues of the crown put together. Instead of refusing to be worshipped, he accepts of the impious and blasphemous titles of — Most holy Father — Lord God — Priest of the World — and Vicar General of Christ upon earth. Princes kneel down before him, and kings and emperors kiss his feet. The Emperor Henry the fifth, with his Empress and their children, waited three days and three nights at the gates of the Pope's palace for absolution; and, notwithstanding this abject submission, the Emperor lost his crown, which the haughty Pontiff gave to another.

S O N.

S O N.

Surely such intolerable insolence and abominable pride can scarcely be matched in the history of barbarous nations.

F A T H E R.

Let us behold the impious successor of that holy man, who in all humility and meekness stiled himself, *Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ*, clothed in his Pontifical grandeur, sitting in the temple of God on a throne high and lifted up, with a triple crown on his head, a treble cross in one hand, a naked sword in the other, and the keys of heaven at his girdle: behold him surrounded with cardinals arrayed in purple, and attended by ambassadors from all nations of the earth. When he appears in public, multitudes lie prostrate in his presence, and pay him the most religious worship and adoration; and, instead of stiling himself *a servant*, he sits in the place, and assumes the authority of the *King of kings and Lord of lords*.

S O N.

I think the gentleman that I mentioned in our first discourse, referred to a text of scripture, where Peter is called a Rock, and the Church of Christ is said to be built upon it.

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F A T H E R.

## FATHER.

That passage of scripture in Matthew, chap. xvi. ver. 18, 19. *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* These words cannot, without great absurdity, and a manifest opposition to other scriptures, be brought to prove the supremacy of St. Peter over the rest of the apostles. For how can it be supposed, that the Church of Christ is built upon Peter, when it is expressly declared, that *other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* And in another place we are informed, that the Church is *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*

## SON.

But what is the meaning of the rock upon which Christ declares he will build his church?

## FATHER.



FATHER.

Commentators differ in their opinions about it. Some suppose that Christ laid his hand on his breast, when he spake these words, and immediately referred to himself; others conclude, that by the Rock, is meant the faith, which Peter had made a confession of; others suppose, that the figure Rock hath reference to the power and spirit of God, which had wrought that faith in Peter's heart, as mentioned in the words immediately preceding: but however this may be, it is a certain truth, that Peter could not be here intended. The Church of Christ cannot be built upon man: weak indeed would be the foundation, if that was the case. The Church of Christ is *not of men, neither supported by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the father who raised him from the dead.*

SON.

And what may the meaning of the 19th verse be, where Christ declares, that he will give to the apostle Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.

FATHER.

These words have an immediate reference to the preaching the gospel, and the miraculous powers which

which were bestowed on the apostles, in order to carry the Redeemer's name, and his heavenly truth, through the various nations of the world: for it may be observed, that the gospel is frequently called the kingdom of heaven in the evangelists: and how natural and beautiful a figure it is, to ascribe the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to those who open these glorious truths to the sons of men. But it may be observed, that though these words were addressed to Peter, they did not belong to him, any more than the rest of the apostles; for the same words with very little variation were afterwards addressed to them all, Mat. xviii. 18. *Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* And John xx. 23. *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

S. O. N.

One would think, if Jesus Christ had given the supremacy to St. Peter over the rest of the apostles, they would have known and acknowledged it, however cautious the apostle might be of assuming it himself.

FATHER,

FATHER.

Doubtless they would, had such been the will of their master: but, if we examine their conduct, we shall find that they had no such apprehensions. When the gentile converts applied to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, to be satisfied concerning the necessity of circumcision, the determination of their counsels was sent by Barnabas and Paul; and they stile themselves, *The apostles, and elders, and brethren*, Acts xv. 23. It does not run, Peter the prince of the Apostles, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and Supreme Head of the Church. So little at that time was the apprehension amongst the Apostles of Peter's infallibility, that Paul *withstood him to his face, and declares he was to be blamed*: and Paul tells us in another place, that he is nothing behind the very chiefest apostles: but certainly he must have been far behind one of them at least, if Peter had been appointed the Supreme Head of the Church.

SON.

Is there any intimation in scripture, that the apostle Peter was Bishop of Rome?

FATHER.

So far from that, it does not appear from scripture, that he ever was at Rome. We read, in  
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the New Testament, of his being at Jerusalem, at Antioch, and Corinth : we read of his travelling through Cappadocia, Sicilia, Pontus, Bythinia, and several parts of Asia ; but it is never related in scripture, that he was at Rome. There is, indeed, a tradition, that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome. But is it possible to suppose, that when the apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, which was fifteen years after Peter is supposed to have accepted that office, he should, in his salutations to several brethren whose names he mentions, omit the good Bishop ? Is it possible to suppose, that when Paul lived two years at Rome, in his own hired house, and wrote his epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, &c. and sends the salutation of several of the brethren at Rome to the various churches, that Peter would have been omitted, had he dwelt at Rome, and been Bishop of that church ? Had Peter been Bishop of Rome when Paul made his first defence before Nero, is it likely that he would have said, *that no man stood with him, but all men forsook him ?*

## S O N.

If it was admitted, that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, and had received the grant of supremacy ;



macy; can it be proved, that the supremacy did not terminate with his death, without descending to his successors?

FATHER,

Neither the supremacy of St. Peter nor his successors are mentioned in the scripture; nor was any such thing heard of in the first ages of the church. It was Gelasius, the fiftieth Bishop of Rome, who first thought of the primacy of St. Peter, and founded it on the words of Christ before mentioned, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, &c.* This was 496 years after Christ; and it was above an hundred years more before the divine right of the Bishop of Rome and his supremacy were fully established upon that claim. So you see, there is no foundation in scripture, nor antiquity, for the impious and assuming authority of the Pope; but it is an unjust and arbitrary claim, advanced by wicked men, with design to corrupt the gospel of Christ, and tyrannize over the world.

S O N.

Has the succession of the Bishops of Rome been regularly continued from St. Peter, admitting him to have been the first Bishop?

FATHER.

FATHER.

If the world is not very uncharitable and censorious, there have been very unfair and wicked practices used in the choice of several Popes; so that many have rose to the Pontifical dignity, who had no just right to it. The Popes are chosen by the Cardinals; and it is recorded in history, that the choice has been influenced by the interest of the several princes of Europe, and the most notorious bribery and corruption, not to say more abominable arts, have been used to promote the views of the different parties. Exemplary piety and capacity in the candidates were not the objects of their attention. Hence persons have been advanced of the most profligate lives, and the most corrupt and blasphemous sentiments. It is a well known saying of Leo the tenth, "What a rare market have we made of this fable of Jesus Christ!"

SON.

But as to the succession, has it been uninterrupted?

FATHER.

Notwithstanding all the regulations which have been made in the choice of a Pope, by confining the

the election to the Cardinals, and shutting them up in their cells, without allowing them to converse with any, till two thirds are agreed, the line of succession has been most notoriously broken. For several years there has been no Pope at all, and sometimes two or three together, who divided the profits amongst them, and spent them in all kinds of debauchery. Some historians reckon almost thirty schisms. In the fourteenth century there was a schism, that lasted 50 years: one Pope resided at Rome, and his brother Pope at Avignon in France, each anathematizing the other, and condemning his decrees; and several Popes have been deposed for infidelity, heresy, and the most abominable crimes.

S O N.

Then I perceive the boasted successors of St. Peter have not always been good men, who have been worthy the high dignity they have assumed.

F A T H E R.

So far from that, several of the Popes have been men of the most abandoned and profligate lives: such monsters in iniquity, as scarcely have been paralleled in history; magicians, necromancers,

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Sodomites, murderers, and guilty of every vice that is shocking to human nature. Baronius, their own historian, confesses, that for a succession of fifty Popes, there was not one pious or virtuous man. The Alexanders, the Hildebrands, the Gregorys, the Bonifaces, are names famous, or rather infamous, in history, for lewdness, debauchery, and all kind of abominations.

S O N.

What kind of infallibility is it, that the Pope pretends to?

F A T H E R.

The writers of the Church of Rome (though there are disputes amongst them) generally place their infallibility in their counsels, after their determinations have received the sanction of the Pope's assent. Thus they say, it belongs to the Church to judge of the true sense and interpretation of scripture, and that no person shall dare to interpret it, in matters relating to faith and manners, in any sense contrary to that which the Church has held, and does still hold. The Apostle Paul could say, *Not that we have dominion over your faith*: but the Church of Rome, with the Pope at the head of it, claims a most unbounded dominion



dominion, both over the bodies and minds of all men.

S O N.

And what are we to understand by the Pope's Bulls?

F A T H E R.

The Pope's Bull is a kind of a manifesto, published yearly by his authority, granting certain privileges and indulgences to such persons as comply with the contents, which are generally the contributing sums of money for the service of the Church: but if the poor will buy it, and pay for it, they have the privilege of its indulgences, and a general pardon for all their sins without confession. The bulls are printed, and every person, rich or poor, great or small, is required to buy one or more. It is by these bulls that the Pope issues his commands, and exercises his dominion over the kingdoms of the earth. They are esteemed most holy and efficacious: and there is a bull which is called the Bull of the Dead, by which the Pope promises pardon of sins to those who purchase it before they die; or, if after death their relations purchase it for them: and there is a ri-

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gorous

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gorous law in some countries; which forbids any person to be buried, either in a church or church-yard, without this bull on their breasts. Thus several charitable persons are excited to buy these bulls, that the poor may have what they call a christian burial.

SON.

What are the Pope's indulgences?

FATHER.

The Pope not only pretends to have authority to pardon sins which are past, but to extend that pardon to sins before they are committed; and such pardons are called indulgences: for it is not to be supposed, but those who can obtain this licence, will indulge themselves in every vice to which their nature is addicted. These indulgences are sold for money, and the price is more or less, according to the circumstances of the person, and the nature of the sin to be committed. This is the precious treasure with which the monks and friars go to market; and vast are the revenues which the *Holy Catholic Church* hath by this means acquired. There are some noble families, who, by interest with the Cardinals and the Pope, and paying such sums as were required, have

have obtained a general pardon for all the sins which shall be committed in the whole family, for twenty, thirty, fifty, or an hundred years to come. Thus by imposing on the credulity, and indulging the vices of mankind, a vast and boundless empire of superstition, slavery, and iniquity, hath been formed. Persons of all ranks are bound to believe whatever the Pope decrees, and to obey his bulls, on pain of damnation. If sovereign princes dare to resist him, and refuse obedience to his arbitrary and imperious usurpation, the trumpet is sounded to sedition; subjects are absolved from their allegiance, and commanded to *bind their kings in chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron*. If his holiness pleases to interdict whole kingdoms, the public worship of God must cease, and their churches be shut up, till they return to their duty.

Thus I have given you a short view of the power and authority, assumed by the Roman Pontiffs, and the pretences on which that authority is founded; and if it was to be enquired, whether the Pope's authority was from heaven, or of men? I think we might, with absolute certainty, reply, it is of the latter. Let us therefore despise this impious and daring usurpation; let us strictly adhere

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to our religious liberty; let us not submit our consciences to man; but remember that *one is our Master, even Christ*; let us remember, that *he is the head of the body, the Church*; and it is appointed, that in all things he shall have the pre-eminence; for God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the Church. Him only then in the Church let us honor and obey.

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**End of Dialogue II.**



84

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**DIALOGUE THE THIRD.**

*Of the Manner, Grandeur, and Magnificence  
of the Romish Worship.*

---

FATHER.

**W**HAT makes you so merry, Son?

SON.

I have been laughing at John the gardener.

FATHER.

On what account?

SON.

You know, Sir, that he is lately come out of  
the country, and is absolutely unacquainted with  
the town: he has just now been giving me a  
strange account of a place he happened to call at  
yesterday: he says there was a vast concourse of  
people;

people; and by what I can learn from his clumsy description, I suppose he was at the Popish Chapel, near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.

## FATHER.

The worship carried on there, must certainly seem very strange to the artless simplicity of a country farmer: but what does the gardener say?

## SON.

He says, that seeing great numbers of people go in at the door, he pressed in among them, thinking it had been a place of worship, and expecting to have heard a good sermon. When he came in, he was very much surpris'd, and could not imagine what was going on. At the further end of the place were a number of candles burning by day-light, and a man dress'd in white, with a red cross on his back: he was making a great many motions, bowings, and cringings, while a little bell rang. This person, and one or two more were reading something which John could not understand. There were several people came in at the door, and dipping their hands in water, which was in a little tin cistern, they kneeled down, and cross'd themselves with such eagerness,

ness, that he was quite astonished. After John had stared about him awhile with the utmost amazement, it came into his head, that they were conjuring; and he durst not stay in the place, for fear they should raise the devil.

FATHER.

That was merry enough! and if we closely consider the matter, honest John was not so much beside the mark: for the business of the mass, which I perceive was then going on, is to turn a small wafer into a real substantial human body, with all its parts; which is as much like conjuring as any thing I know.

SON.

I know very little of the Romish manner of worship, and shall be glad to be informed.

FATHER.

The worship of the Church of Rome is carried on with the utmost grandeur and magnificence; it is in every respect pompous, splendid, and full of shew; which is designed to raise the veneration of the populace.

SON.

S O N.

I should be glad to know what are the ornaments and riches of their Churches?

F A T H E R.

At the Cathedral Church of St. Salvator, at Zaragoza in Spain, there are forty-five prebendaries; there are a dean, arch-deacon, and chaunter: besides these, there are sixty-six beneficiates, six priests, and a master and twelve boys for the music: and in the lower class are sixty clerks, under clerks, and sextons. The church contains thirty chapels, large and small. The great altar is thirty feet high, and ten broad, all of marble, with many marble images of saints. On the middle of the altar, is the transfiguration of Christ on mount Tabor; the apostles are represented in marble statues. The front of the altar table is made of solid silver; the frame gilt, and adorned with precious stones. In the treasure of the church they keep sixteen statues of saints in pure silver. Amongst these is a silver statue of St. Peter Argues, who was a prebendary of this Church, and killed by the Saracens. This image is adorned with precious stones to a great value. Besides these, there are twelve half bodies of other saints, and many relics set with gold and diamonds.

S O N.



S O N.

And what is the use of all these silver saints ?

F A T H E R.

The images of the saints are the objects of their adoration : they prostrate themselves before them at certain times and occasions ; and they carry them about in their processions ; of which I shall inform you hereafter. But the altars, and the images of the saints, are not the only ornaments and riches of their churches. In the Church I have been speaking of, are forty-eight silver candlesticks for the altar table : besides these, there are three large silver candlesticks of three hundred pounds weight each : one of these is for the blessed candle which is burnt on Candlemas-day. Besides these there are thirty-six small silver candlesticks, and six of solid gold for the great festivals, four possetts of silver, and two of solid gold. There are two large crosses, one of silver, and one of gold, ten feet high, to carry before the processions. In this church are ten thousand ounces of silver plate, part of it gilt, to adorn the two corners of the altar on great festivals, when the archbishop officiates, and says the great mass. Besides all this, there are thirty-three silver lamps ; the smallest of which is an hundred and fifty pounds

pounds weight; and the largest, which is before the great altar, gilt all over, is six hundred and thirty pounds weight. There are besides all that has been mentioned, twenty chalices of pure gold, and sixty-four of silver, with abundance of rich ornaments for the priests, of inexpressible value, besides the rich chalice, which the archbishop only uses in his pontifical dress.

## S O N.

Vast indeed are the riches of the Romish Churches: it is no wonder that weak minds are dazzled with the glare of so many ornaments, and overcome with the brightness of so much gold and silver.

## F A T H E R.

The things already mentioned are but trifles in comparison with the great *Custodia*, on which they carry the great host through the streets, on the festival of *Corpus Christi*. This wonderful machine contains five hundred weight of gold and silver; its figure is a sun, which is as large as a coach wheel: the rays of this sun are of solid gold, and at the end of each ray is a star: the rays are adorned with precious stones, and sparkle with diamonds, and in the centre of each  
star

star is a rich emerald set in gold. The sun rises from the base three feet on a silver pedestal which is gilt; and the great host is placed in the centre of the sun: this center is set round with large diamonds, and the host is contained in a rich chalice: the whole is placed on a gilt base, and carried about the streets by twelve priests; and wo be to him that does not fall down and worship before it.

S O N.

This is a strange sort of religion indeed! but really its grandeur and magnificence is almost past belief.

F A T H E R.

The chapel and the image of the Virgin Mary, who may be called the great goddess of the Roman Catholics, because she is worshipped with more splendor and pomp than her son, in the church of the lady del Pilar, in the forementioned city of Zaragoza, exceeds what I have before described. They have a tradition, which is generally believed (and wo be to him that dares to disbelieve) that the image which is worshipped in this chapel, was brought down from heaven by the angels. This cannot be spoken against at Zara-

G

goza,

goza, any more than it could be denied at Ephesus, that the image of *Diana* fell down from *Jupiter*. The little chapel, where the image of the Virgin is exalted on a pillar, is only exceeded in all the world, by the image and chapel of the same Lady, at Loretto in Italy : and, according to the account which the priests and friars give, the Italian chapel ought to exceed it : for the angels brought only the image of the Virgin on a pillar to Zaragoza ; but to Loretto, they were so obliging as to bring the image, chapel, and all.

S O N.

And are these accounts firmly believed ?

F A T H E R.

Not only these, but a great many more, equally incredible, which I shall give you an account of hereafter. But as to the riches of the Virgin's image and chapel at Zaragoza, you are to observe that in the little chapel where the image is placed upon a pillar, are four silver images of angels, each as large as a common-sized man, and each of them bears a large silver candlestick. There are two altars: the front of each is solid silver, with gilt frames set with precious stones. Before this image of the Virgin Mary, there is a lamp of chrystal, in  
which



which twelve wax candles burn night and day. The several parts of this lamp or candlestick are set with gold and diamonds. This noble candlestick was sent as a present to the Lady, by Don John of Austria; who also left her his heart. This uncommon present was bequeathed her in his last will, and was accordingly delivered, and it hangs before the image in a gold box set with diamonds.

S O N.

Don John of Austria was very obliging.

F A T H E R.

You see to what an extravagant and ridiculous height, the folly of superstition and idol-worship may rise. One would think the rational powers of the human mind were not capable of so great a degree of depravity as to think there was any religion in such fopperies as these: but we must ascribe it to the prejudice of education, and the dazzling glare of ornament which appears in such worship.

S O N.

What are the rest of the decorations of the Lady's chapel?

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

The image of the Lady, as I before observed, is asserted to have been brought down from heaven by the angels, and therefore it is unknown what substance it is composed of: and that none may come near enough to discover, there is a grate of solid silver, which encloses the whole chapel: and as the pillar on which the image stands, is declared to have been brought with it, that also is supposed to be holy, and it is looked upon as a great piece of devotion to kiss it.

SON.

But what are the ornaments and rich dresses of this image?

FATHER.

You will think that this lady is a great lover of finery, when you hear the extravagance of her dress. You are to observe, that she is dressed every day in the colour of the Church's festival, and her mantle is made of the richest silk embroidered with gold: this she only wears one day, and has every day a new one. She is decorated with roses made of clusters of diamonds and precious stones. She has so many different sets of these jewels, that for three years she hath fresh ones every

every day. She has three hundred and sixty five necklaces of pearls and diamonds, with six chains of gold set with diamonds, with which her robes are adorned at the great festivals. Besides all this, she has seven crowns of gold, set with diamonds and emeralds, the least of which is worth half a million, and the largest weighs twenty-five pounds, and is set so thick with diamonds, that the gold cannot be discerned.

S O N.

That so much riches should be lavished on a stupid image is really incredible: but it puts me in mind of a text before quoted: for this woman is indeed *arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls.*

F A T H E R.

Next to the little chapel where the image is enclosed, is another with a great altar to say mass before it. This altar is made of solid silver; the table is of jasper stone: the front is silver; the frame gilt and set with precious stones. In this chapel the historian informs us, are an hundred and ninety-five silver lamps, the largest five hundred weight, and the smallest one hundred: and  
in.

in the room of the Lady's treasures, are innumerable heads, arms, legs, hands, eyes, &c. which have been presented to the Lady by persons who have supposed themselves cured of various diseases by her intercession. I have given you a slight view of the decorations and ornaments of the Romish Churches, that you may form some idea of the grandeur and magnificence of their worship: the high adoration which they pay to this image, and the blasphemous prayers they address to her, I shall take notice of, when I consider the worshipping of saints and images, practised in the Church of Rome.

## S O N.

What other instances are there of the grandeur of their worship?

## F A T H E R.

The power of imagination can scarcely form a scene of greater grandeur and magnificence, than the procession in which they carry the consecrated host along the streets at Zaragoza. It is to be observed, that the Popish Doctrine is, that the bread and wine in the sacrament is changed into the real body and blood, soul and divinity of  
Jesus



Jesus Christ; of which I shall take notice hereafter. So that it is God himself, which they suppose is contained in the host, and as such it is worshipped with the profoundest adoration.

S O N.

This is strange doctrine indeed; and seems to me to be an insult on common sense, but in what manner do they carry it about the streets?

F A T H E R.

You may remember I have before described the rich Custodia in which they place the consecrated host. This, at the appointed day, is carried about the streets in the following manner: the dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Salvator sends an officer to summon all the communities of the friars; all the clergy of the parish churches; the vice-roy, governor, magistrates, and judges of the civil and criminal councils, with the lord chancellor of the kingdom, and all the corporations of the city, to meet together on the Thursday following, at the Metropolitan Cathedral Church of St. Salvator, and bring all the standards, trumpets, and trophies, with the giants, which were six monstrous images, three of men, and three of women, fifteen feet high, with six lesser ones. These statues

tues were dressed in men and women's clothes, and made of light wood, that they might be carried about. The friars of convents are ordered to bring with them all the silver bodies of saints on a base or pedestal, which were in their respective churches or convents.

Orders are published in every street through which the sacrament is to pass, that the inhabitants carefully clean the streets, and cover the ground with greens and flowers, and to put their best hangings in their windows; and he who disregards these orders, is fined twenty pistoles.

At three in the afternoon, the vice-roy, with the judges, magistrates, and officers, go to the archbishop's palace, and accompany him to church; where after several ceremonies, the archbishop, drest in his pontifical robes, placeth the sacrament on the Custodia, and the procession goes out of the church in the following order.

#### S O N.

There is a wonderful parade indeed. I suppose this is an high day with the common people, who are vastly fond of shew?

#### F A T H E R.

Indeed it is so, and the whole is regarded with the utmost reverence and awe. The bagpipes lead

lead the procession, with the great and small giants dancing along the streets: these are so made, that a man goes in them and dances them: next goes the large silver cross of the Cathedral, carried by a clerk priest; with him go two young assistants with silver candlesticks and lighted candles. Between the piper and the cross, a man with a sharp hook, called St. Paul's hook, cuts down the signs or any thing that is in the way of the Host. Next follow, in order, the members of the corporations, with their respective standards, in all about two thousand men with each a wax candle in his hand: then follow the friars of the convents, about two thousand in number, with each a wax candle: after them proceed about fifteen hundred nuns, I suppose all veiled: then follow the clergy of the several parish churches, with the cross of the parish before, and the minister behind; each friar and priest holding a wax candle. The clergy of the Cathedrals of St. Salvator and the Lady of Pilar in their sacerdotal ornaments, with the musicians of both cathedrals, proceed in procession with music and singing. Then follows the grand Custodia, with the sacrament, under a sumptuous canopy by twelve priests, while six priests are kneeling alternately, and burning incense on both sides the Host: then follow the dean and two prebends:

prebends: after them the archbishop in his pontifical robes, and the vice-roy at his right-hand: and then proceed the deacon and sub-deacon, one at the right hand and the other at the left, all under the canopy.

S O N.

Such a procession I never heard of before: surely it must take up a considerable time before it is finished.

F A T H E R.

This procession lasts four hours, from the time it goes out of the church before it returns. All the bells of the convents and parish churches ring during the time. The whole city is full of joy; and the people, from their windows and balconies, throw flowers upon the canopy of the sacrament as it passes.

S O N.

But have you related the whole procession?

F A T H E R.

After the above mentioned, proceed the Great Chancellor, Presidents, and Councils; and last of all, the nobility, men and women, with lighted candles.



candles. After tracing the principal streets of the city, the procession returns to the cathedral, and the sacrament is restored to its place. There is a stage built before the altar; and the entertainment of the day concludes with a sacramental or divine comedy, which lasts about an hour.

SON.

These pompous processions and costly decorations must be attended with vast expence. How are they supported?

FATHER.

You will think them costly indeed, when I have related the whole. Besides the grand Custodia already described, and the rich chalice set with diamonds, there are thirty-three silver crosses belonging to the convents and parish churches. These crosses are each ten feet high, and about the thickness of the pole of a coach. Besides these, are thirty-three small crosses, which the priests and friars, who walk in procession, carry in their hands. These crosses, though small, are held in higher estimation than the larger: for in the middle of the cross is a piece of wood, which, they say, is part of the identical cross on which Christ was crucified. This is of immense value  
in

in their esteem, and is set round with diamonds. There are thirty-three sacerdotal cloaks, made of the richest stuffs, edged with pearls, emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones. Besides all this, there are sixty-six silver candlesticks, each four feet high, and several large vessels of pure gold, besides a number of silver, and silver gilt. To these you are to add three hundred and eighty silver statues of saints on their rich gilt pedestals. Two hundred of these are whole statues, the remainder are busts. Several of these images are gilt, and have mitres on their heads, embroidered with precious stones. Lastly, you are to take notice of the image of St. Michael with wings, and a silver devil under his feet. Such is the account which Mr. Anthony Gavin, who was once a Popish priest, but renounced their superstition, and embraced the Protestant religion, gives of the rich ornaments of their churches, the splendor of the Virgin Mary's image, the immense riches of her chapels, and the grandeur and magnificence of their processions.

## S O N.

The account is really amazing: and it is no wonder that the minds of the votaries of the Romish religion are dazzled with the glare of such a  
vast

vast profusion of ornament; and it is hard to conceive, how the prodigious expence which attends this magnificence and grandeur can be supported.

FATHER.

You may leave that to the management of the superiors of their churches, convents, and religious houses. They need no instruction on that head, but know how to make it pay, as you will see when we come to treat on the several articles of their superstition. One considerable article of expence you have yet to be informed of. I mean, their priests garments; which are so various and expensive, that the different dresses of a common parish priest will cost two or three thousand pounds.

SON.

What can their different dresses be, to amount to such an enormous sum?

FATHER.

They have different robes for almost every week in the year, according to the different festivals and fasts; and different ornaments to honor their various saints and martyrs. But having given you an account of the magnificence and

H

glory

glory of their temples, and the great profusion and richness of her ornaments, I dare say you plainly perceive, that the Church of Rome has substituted the glare of ornament, and the dazzling splendor of her decorations, instead of those things which tend to enlighten the understanding, and warm the heart with real devotion.

S O N.

It is very apparent indeed: but having taken a survey of the inside of the Romish churches, with their decorations, if you please, Sir, we will proceed to the manner of their worship.

F A T H E R.

The worship of the Church of Rome may be comprehended under three heads: 1. The mass; 2. The adoration of saints and angels; and 3. The worship of images. We will begin with the first.

S O N.

What are we to understand by the mass?

F A T H E R.

Before we further proceed, let us take a view of the vast chaos of religious trumpery we have been considering; and let us diligently enquire, if



if these things have any foundation in the holy scriptures. Whatever the Church of Rome has dared to advance to the contrary, we Protestants must believe that Christ himself is king and sole law-giver in his church; and every part of religious worship ought to be conducted according to the rules laid down in the New Testament.

In the former dispensation, the God of Israel gave to his servant Moses the most minute and circumstantial description of every part of his worship. His tabernacle, his altar, and every sacred utensil to be used in the solemn assemblies of his people, were described with an exactness and precision which left no room for the productions of human invention. And the great King of the universe having declared his will respecting his public worship, he insisted on the most scrupulous exactness and steady regard to his precepts. Moses was commanded to make every thing according to the pattern which he had seen in the mount: and when two young priests presumed to alter the form of the appointed worship, and offer incense before the Lord in a way which he had not commanded, the peculiar and distinguished vengeance which they suffered convinced the nation, that God will be worshipped his own way, and will not admit of human innovations.

S O N.

The case of Aaron's sons is certainly an awful instance of the divine displeasure burning against those who dared to alter the form of divine worship, and stand before the Lord in a way of their own invention.

F A T H E R.

And can it be supposed, that the Great Supreme, who insisted on the utmost punctuality, and demanded the most scrupulous exactness in the performance of the minutest rite belonging to the legal dispensation, would be more lax and careless, and allow a greater scope to human discretion under the Christian? Can it be supposed, that Christ, the great King and Law-giver in his church, would not be as exact and clear in the institution of the external rites belonging to his religion, as Moses was in the establishment of those belonging to the law? And can it be supposed, that Jesus Christ will admit the introduction of human invention, or the impure mixture of Pagan idolatry, into his worship, without the severest tokens of his righteous displeasure?

S O N.

As the gospel of Christ must be supposed to be more pure and perfect than the legal dispensation,

tion, one would think, that the Supreme Legislator would exact as strict a regard to his commands in the former as in the latter.

FATHER.

Consider, then, with what righteous indignation that God, who punished with immediate death the two sons of Aaron, because they varied in one small instance from his precepts, must look down from heaven on the enormous heap of utensils used in his religion, which he never commanded? What must he think of such a number of silver lamps and candlesticks, such a number of magnificent altars, decorated with gold, and silver, and precious stones? With what indignation must he behold such numbers of silver crosses, such multitudes of images of saints, in gold, silver, wood, and stone? With what resentment must he view the image of the Virgin Mary, decorated in the manner before described, to which that adoration is paid which belongs only to himself?

SON.

It cannot be supposed, that God, who is a spirit, and requires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, can approve of such a worship as seems wholly to consist in things external.

## FATHER.

With what contempt must the blessed Jesus look down from heaven, to behold such a multiplicity of fasts and festivals introduced into his religion, which he never commanded? What must he think, of such a prodigious number of priests garments; white vestments for the festivals of Christ and the Virgin Mary, red for the martyrs, violet for Advent and Lent, and black for the masses of the dead? What must he think, of dry bones and rotten teeth being worshipped, and all the precious relics in such high estimation at Rome?

## SON.

Perhaps the advocates for the Romish Religion may say, that these things are not forbidden in the New Testament.

## FATHER.

We do not find, that the crime of Aaron's sons was forbidden; but the evil of it lay in its not being commanded: and such is the evil of the various innovations we have been considering. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, *I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds*



*minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* Now the simplicity of the gospel is corrupted by introducing ceremonies and practices which Christ never commanded. By this practice it ceases to be the religion of Jesus, and becomes the invention of man. Superstition consists in beholding, with religious veneration, things in which there is no religion at all.

S O N.

It appears very plain to me, that all the religious trumpery you have been describing, has an apparent tendency to corrupt the gospel of Christ; and the glare of so much pomp and ornament seems designed to attract the attention, and impress the minds of the vulgar with such emotions, as they may mistake for religion.

F A T H E R.

This is certainly the case: and these magnificent decorations and splendid utensils are the tools which the priests use to carry on their trade, and not only cheat the poor people out of their souls, but also out of their substance. For they may, with the highest propriety, be supposed to adopt the language of Demetrius to the craftsmen: *Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth:*

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*wealth*: for the several branches of the Romish superstition are like so many magnets; but more powerful in their operation: for the magnets only attract iron and steel; but the crosses, the images, and masses, with various other contrivances, which will be hereafter mentioned, draw gold and silver.

S O N.

Then the poor people who are under the yoke of Rome are under great oppression as well as deception?

F A T H E R.

This will plainly appear as we advance in our enquiries; and we shall have reason with the sincerest thankfulness and praise, to approach the throne of that God, who has caused the light of his glorious gospel to shine in our land, and delivered us from a burden so intolerable to be borne; and at the same time, it is incumbent on every one who knows his glorious privileges, to use his utmost endeavours to stop the progress of such irrational and unscriptural doctrines and practices, and *stand fast in the liberty, wherein Christ hath made us free.*

S O N.

S O N.

Are there no texts of scripture which the Romish priests produce in defence of their crosses, images, relics, &c.

F A T H E R.

The whole Popish clergy, the priests, friars, monks, jesuits, cardinals, and Pope, are hereby called upon to produce one passage in the New Testament, which contains either an example, or command, to use crosses, images, or relics, of dead saints in the Christian worship. Every child who has learnt the ten commandments, knows where the making and worshipping images are forbidden; but I have never yet heard of a text where it is commanded. The apostle Paul tells us, that he had declared the whole counsel of God, and kept back nothing which was profitable for the churches. Let the friends of Rome peruse his epistles: let them read with the utmost attention and care; and if they can produce any command for the using of crosses, making processions, worshipping images, or going pilgrimages to search for relics, I will turn Roman Catholic myself. In our next conference, we will consider what they call the sacrifice of the mass. This I shall conclude

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conclude with a few lines out of a poetical paraphrase of St. Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus, which are very applicable to the subject of our present enquiry. The apostle had been warning them to beware of false teachers, who would arise after his decease, and adds

Nor these alone, but in his destined hour  
The MAN OF SIN will shew his hateful head.  
This SON OF black PERDITION will arise  
With impious boldness to assume the seat,  
To seize the sceptre, and usurp the sway  
Of the REDEEMER. And he will so far  
Succeed, as in the temple to appear,  
Thron'd like a God, and like a God adored.

But soon his government will manifest  
From whence he comes, and by what power he  
reigns.  
For those who love the Lord with grief will see  
The pure simplicity of Jesus Christ  
With heathen rites and customs stained; and hear  
Instead of Gospel truth, a motley train  
Of lying tales and fables, hatch'd in hell.  
Then will the virgin bride of Christ be driven  
To mourn in secret; while appears in view  
An odious prostitute, bedaubed with paint;  
Bedeck'd



Bedeck'd with taudry trappings to allure,  
And stiffen'd out in purple, and in gold.

So greedy are mankind to swallow error  
So fond of pomp and shew; that this delusion  
With wonderful rapidity will spread  
Amongst the nations. And the grand deceiver  
Will proudly hold an abject world in chains,  
And stretch his purple wings from pole to pole.

End of Dialogue III.

DIALOGUE the FOURTH.

*Transubstantiation, or the pretended Sacrifice of  
the Mass, considered.*

SON.

YOU will give me leave, Sir, to remind you of your promise of continuing your account of the Roman Catholic manner of worship. I have thought much of the stupendous greatness and amazing grandeur of their churches; but more of their public processions, and the prodigious number of images of saints which they carry about.

FATHER.

Of their worship of images, I shall inform you another time: at present we are to consider their Mass, which is the principal part of their worship.

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SON.

S O N.

I have often heard talk of the Papists going to mafs, and have observed that their chapels are called Mafs-Houfes; but never clearly understood the meaning of the mafs.

F A T H E R.

I fhall not scruple to call the mafs of the Roman Catholics, an impious and idolatrous profanation of the Lord's Supper; not more ftupid and ridiculous, than it is abominable and blafphemous.

S O N.

What do they believe concerning the Lord's fupper?

F A T H E R.

What they believe is an insult on common fenfe; a pofition fo unaccountably extravagant, fo foolifh and impoffible in itfelf, that one would think no perfon out of bedlam could give credit to it. They believe, that the bread and wine by the confecration of the prieft, are changed into the real, identical, fubftantial body, blood, flefh, bones, and nerves, life, foul, and divinity, of the Lord Jefus Chrift. This is a propofition of fo

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extraordinary

extraordinary a nature, that it may not be improper to give you the words of the Papists themselves. It was thus expressed by the Council of Trent, which was the last of their general councils, and is the standard of modern Popery, viz. *That by the consecrating of bread and wine, Jesus Christ, very God and very man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those visible signs: that there is a conversion of the whole substance of bread in this holy sacrament, into the whole substance of the body of Christ; and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood; which conversion is fitly and properly called Transubstantiation.*

S O N.

This is a long hard word; but not so hard to pronounce, as the doctrine is to believe. I am really astonished, Sir!

F A T H E R.

This doctrine was looked upon of such importance by the Council before mentioned, that an anathema was pronounced against all *who believe and teach otherwise*: and this precious doctrine is further explained in the Trent Catechism, that *is the true body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin,*



*Virgin, and is now in heaven with his soul and divinity entire, in every part of bread and every drop of wine. That no part of the substance of bread and wine remains. And that the accidents of bread and wine, which do remain, are in no subject, but exist by themselves in a wonderful manner, which is not too curiously to be enquired into.*

S O N.

This is conjuration indeed. But by what kind of arguments do the asserters of this proposition attempt to prove it? I should think it was necessary in the first place to persuade men out of their senses: for as you justly observed, this doctrine is an insult on common sense.

F A T H E R.

They think they have a very powerful argument to prove their point, and insist on nothing less than the express words of Christ, Luke xxii. 19, 20.

*And he took the bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise, also, he took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you.*

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S O N.

SON.

And what, Sir, do you apprehend to be the meaning of this passage?

FATHER.

When you have read these words, you have heard the whole argument, which the Church of Rome advances in the proof of a doctrine so manifestly absurd and impossible. They strictly adhere to the plain literal sense of our Saviour's words, and like a parrot repeat, This is my body, this is my body. But the Reformed Churches believe the words to have an allusive or figurative meaning; and that the great Redeemer designed to be understood to mean, This bread is an emblem or representation of my body which will shortly be given up and broken; and the wine in this cup, of my blood, which will soon be shed for the redemption of sinners: and I now appoint the eating of bread and drinking of wine, to be a standing memorial of my sufferings and death in the Christian Church to the end of time.

SON.

The sense which the Protestants put on the words under consideration, seems very proper and clearly

clearly applicable to the occasion of their being spoken; and if there are no plain reasons which forbid the words to be understood in a figurative sense, I think we may fairly conclude, that they are rightly understood by the Reformed Churches.

FATHER.

The literal sense of any words is not to be departed from, without there be strong reasons for it; and in the case before us, there is the utmost necessity to depart from the letter of the text. To prove that necessity, one would think it would be sufficient to observe, that the literal sense is impossible to be true. God deals not with his rational creatures in such a manner as the adversaries of our religion would have us believe. There is nothing which the gospel proposes to our belief, that is manifestly contrary to reason and common sense. Our God requires us to make the best use of our understandings; to exert our rational powers, and shew ourselves men.

SON.

Will not the words fairly admit of a figurative meaning, according to the stated rules of interpretation?

FATHER.

That the words are figurative, every one must believe, who will be at the pains of reading them. *This cup*, said the Redeemer, *is the new testament in my blood*. So that, if the good Catholics will closely follow the literal sense, it was the cup, and not the wine it contained, which was changed into the blood of Christ.

SON.

It is very plain the cup, by a common figure, is put for the wine it contains; but as to the bread?

FATHER.

To understand the meaning of any author, there is no better method than to consider his common way of writing or speaking. If his stile is frequently full of figures, and if the words we want to understand, will not bear a literal meaning, it may with the utmost certainty be concluded, that they are figurative. Let us by this rule consider the words before us; and if we attend to the writings of the evangelists, we shall find that the great Redeemer frequently made use of the boldest figures of speech. This was agreeable to the customs of the eastern nations and the Jewish church. Thus we find the  
exalted



exalted Saviour, in his discourses with his disciples, when speaking of himself, says, *I am the door*; *I am the true vine*; and several other expressions of like nature. Now if we believe, that when the Lord said, *This is my body*, that the bread was converted into his real body, why may not we believe, that when Christ said, *I am the door*, he was really changed into a door; and when he said, *I am the true vine*, he was metamorphosed into the tree.

SON.

There seems to be as much reason in one case as the other; but such sort of constructions would introduce confusion without end.

FATHER.

To avoid this confusion, there is a necessity of understanding the words of Christ, *This is my body*, in a figurative sense, importing, *This bread signifies my body*, and is the memorial of it. No person can pretend, that they cannot be so understood, or that any absurdity necessarily follows on such a construction: for in this view their sense is easy and natural, and clearly applicable to the case in hand. Why then should we involve the Christian

Christian doctrine in darkness and absurdity, and perplex the minds of men with mysteries of our own making.

S O N.

What was the immediate occasion of these words?

F A T H E R.

To understand these words in a literal sense, is absurd and improbable; because this sense is contrary to the subject spoken of, and the occasion of the words. Our Lord had been celebrating the passover with his disciples. The passover was a solemn festival of the Jews, appointed by God in commemoration of the destroying angel passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he slew all the first-born in Egypt. This feast consisted in eating a roasted lamb, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The eating this lamb was called the Lord's passover. So the Jewish church always understood it, from its first institution. The disciples of Christ were all Jews, both by birth and religion; they well knew the meaning of their passover, and were used to such representations. When supper was ended, the Lord took some of the bread that was left, and, after blessing

blessing and breaking it, he gave it to his disciples; informing them, that as the lamb which they had eaten was taken in remembrance of their deliverance when the Egyptians were destroyed, so that bread should be eaten in remembrance of his death and sufferings, in the latest ages of the church.

S O N.

In this view, the figurative sense of the words is easy and natural; but the literal, forced, absurd, and ridiculous.

F A T H E R.

This will be evident, if we consider the words immediately following, *This do in remembrance of me.* How absurd are these words, if we suppose the real presence in the sacrament? When we are requested to remember a friend, is it a present or an absent one? And when Christ says, *This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me;* how easy and natural is it to suppose, that his meaning was, Look upon this bread as an emblem or representation of my body, which will soon be broken for you; and do this after my death, as a standing memorial of what I have done and suffered on your account?

## S O N.

It seems very plain to me, that this must be the true meaning of the words.

## F A T H E R.

And in this sense, it is manifest, they were understood by the apostles. To understand the words of our Lord in a literal sense, and suppose his real presence in the sacrament of the supper, is very ridiculous, when Christ says, *Do this in remembrance of me.* For when a memorial is set up in remembrance of any person or action, it supposes the person to be absent, and the action past. What sense can it be, to suppose our Saviour to have said, Take my body in remembrance of my body: Take myself as a token to remember me by? Besides, our Lord's own words plainly prove, that the notion of the real presence is false. *I go,* says he, *to the Father, and you shall see me no more.* And in another place, *Me ye have not always.*

## S O N.

These remarks seem to me to be just.

## F A T H E R.

Besides, it is plain, that the words under consideration were not understood in a literal sense

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by the apostles. This may be learned from the account which the apostle Paul gives of this transaction to the Corinthians, when, having repeated the words of the institution, *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come*: here observe, that at the time it is eaten the apostle calls it bread; which he would not have done, if it had been changed into the real body of Jesus Christ: and, that none may mistake, the apostle calls it bread three times over.

SON.

I think enough has been said to set this matter in a clear and convincing point of light, and no more need be added on this head.

FATHER.

I have been the more particular in examining this point of doctrine, and laying down such observations as might give you a clear idea of the subject; because Transubstantiation is a leading doctrine with the Papists. Upon this foundation they raise the sacrifice of the mass, and make such use of it, as brings in immense riches to the clergy; so they have made it pay very well for all the pains they have been at, in supporting a doctrine

doctrine so contrary to the natural notions of mankind.

S O N.

I am really surpris'd, that men who have the use of their reason, can be persuaded to believe things so shocking, even to common sense.

F A T H E R.

As we have no way to form our ideas but by our reason and our senses, it is to be supposed, that our Maker will deal with us agreeable to the nature which he has given us: whatever, therefore, is contrary to the reason of our minds, and the senses of our bodies, must justly be pronounced absurd and impossible. Now in the case before us, our reason informs us, that the words of Christ, *This is my body*, can only mean, *This bread is the emblem or representation of my body*, which will soon be broken for you. It is very plain, that the disciples could not understand them in a literal sense: for the body of Christ was full in their view: and could they understand that he had two bodies? And when Christ partook of the bread, could they suppose that he eat himself?

S O N.

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Besides, as the bread and wine appear to all our senses to remain the same; as the touch, the taste, and smell all unite to declare it to be real bread, it remains no doubtful matter: there is every evidence the nature of the case is capable of on one side, and only a bare assertion on the other; so that this doctrine is a downright defiance and affront to the natural reason and common sense of mankind: we may, therefore, leave the Roman Catholics to assert it as often and as positively as they please.

FATHER.

But they are to be told, that if they deny the evidence of sense, they destroy the great proofs of the truth of Christianity, and all the evidence of those miracles which were wrought to support it. When our Lord healed the sick, and raised the dead, he appealed to the senses of men; and these were sufficient to convince them, that these facts were true; and that they were the work of a Divine Power, appeared plainly to the reason of mankind. The belief of the important event of our Lord's resurrection, depended on the evidence of sense; and to this Christ himself appeals, after he was risen from the dead. He said to his

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disciples,

disciples, *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And he shewed them his hands and his feet.* Here he appeals to their sight and their feeling; and both these senses declare, the bread in the Lord's Supper to remain in every respect bread still.

S O N.

And I remember, when Thomas was more scrupulous and unbelieving than the rest of the disciples, our Lord proposed for his conviction no higher an evidence than his senses. *Then saith he unto Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.*

F A T H E R.

To all this may be added, that the doctrine we are considering is plainly impossible, and implies so many contradictions, that it cannot be true. Whatever implies an evident contradiction to the nature and reason of things, is above all power, and cannot possibly be done; for that which builds up one side of a contradiction, necessarily pulls down the other. It is manifest, that the doctrine



doctrine of Transubstantiation implies a plain contradiction; for it supposes the bread to be turned into the broken body of Christ, when he himself was present, and his body remained whole and unbroken. For if the pronouncing the words, *This is my body*, by a priest, produces this amazing effect, the pronouncing them by Christ himself must be supposed to have the same power. Then there was Christ's real natural body before their eyes, by which he took the bread, and spoke these words; and his broken body in his own hand at the same time. This implies an evident contradiction, and is in every respect so ridiculous and absurd, that no more need be said about it.

S O N.

At what period of time was that doctrine introduced into the church?

F A T H E R.

Some of the fathers in the first six centuries, in their devotional writings, speak of the sacrament with high veneration, but it was always considered by them as the emblem or resemblance of Christ's body. Pope Gelasius before mentioned, speaking of the sacrament, says, *It ceases not to*

*the substance and nature of bread and wine, but is the image and resemblance of Christ's body and blood.* This doctrine of the real presence was first advanced by a monk in the beginning of the seventh century, and afterwards was favored by the second council of *Nice*. This council first supported the worship of images, in opposition to the council of Constantinople.

S O N.

Was this doctrine received by the church at that time?

F A T H E R.

It was several hundred years before it was firmly established. It was brought into the Latin Church before the beginning of the tenth century, but was contested and opposed for near three hundred years. In the twelfth century, it was introduced by Pope Innocent; the same who deposed our King John, and set up the inquisition. This Pope advanced it by his own authority, in a very imperious and unprecedented manner, without the consent of the Synod.

S O N.

Did this absurd and nonsensical doctrine stand, when it was thus introduced?

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

It was not fully established till the fifteenth century; when it obtained the sanction of the council of Trent, and received the name of Transubstantiation. Thus you see, it has no foundation in scripture, nor footing in the ancient church; but is a novel invention, introduced by bad men, and hath been the cause of great evils, producing idolatry, cruelty, and profaneness.

SON.

In what manner does this doctrine produce those dreadful evils?

FATHER.

The bread and wine being supposed to be changed into the real substantial body and blood of Christ, they are adored with that worship which is only due to the Supreme God. You may remember, with what pomp the sacrament is carried about the streets, and with what profound adoration it is worshipped. Ladies of quality will get out of their coaches, and kneel down in the dirt to this senseless idol, when they happen to meet it in the streets: and all sorts of people are obliged to fall down and worship it.

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SON.

S O N.

I suppose the cruelty which this idolatry causes, falls upon those who refuse to worship this pretended deity. Nebuchadnezzar of old, I remember, was inspired with horrid rage and cruelty on the like occasion: for the tyrant's heart burned with the most outrageous fury against all who would not worship the idol which he had set up.

F A T H E R.

You have rightly guessed; for the whole fury of Rome fall on the persons who will not join her in this senseless and impious adoration.

S O N.

Have any been put to death on this account?

F A T H E R.

I do not believe that there have been so many lives sacrificed to Moloch, the most horrid and impious idol in the heathen world, as there have been to this darling idol of Rome. How often have the saints of God been sacrificed to this abominable deity; and how frequently have his altars been stained with blood! And yet, after all, it appears



appears from history, that though the Papists so rigorously impose this senseless and impossible doctrine on others, they can hardly believe it themselves.

S O N.

What proof can be produced that this is the case?

F A T H E R.

It is related in history, that when Cardinal Perron was ill of the disorder of which he died, he was asked by some of his friends, what he thought of *Transubstantiation*. To this he answered, he thought it was a MONSTER. His friends enquired how then he came to write so learnedly and copiously in its defence. He replied, that he had done the utmost which his wit and parts had enabled him, to *colour over this abuse, and render it plausible*; but he had done like those who had employed all their force to defend an ill cause.

S O N.

That declaration was very remarkable.

F A T H E R.

It is also related of Archbishop *Usher*, a person of the profoundest learning, and the most meek  
and

and amiable disposition, that having convinced several Romish priests of the errors of their religion; he asked them, what they, who said mass every day, and were not obliged to confess venial sins, could have to trouble their confessor with? They ingenuously acknowledged to him, that the chiefest part of their constant confession, was their unbelief as to the point of *Transubstantiation*; for which they mutually acquitted and absolved each other.

## S O N.

If that is really the case, it seems very hard that they should persecute, and put others to death for not believing.

## F A T H E R.

Such injustice and cruelty deserves a harsher name; but let us consider what a figure this doctrine makes, according to their own account of it. The bread and wine in the sacrament they say, is converted into the real body and blood of Jesus Christ. This they eat and drink; but what can be more abhorrent and detestable, than to eat the flesh, and drink the blood of any human person, much more of the Saviour of mankind.

## S O N.

SON.

There is indeed something very horrid and shocking to human nature in the thought.

FATHER.

And what renders it the more so, is the case of the Virgin Mary, who, if she ever partook of the Lord's Supper, which, I suppose, will not be denied, must eat the flesh of her own Son. How horrid is this! and how much like the conduct of Saturn, who is fabled by the poets to have devoured his own children. But having said enough on this argument, to convince any reasonable person, I shall conclude it with the noble challenge, which the excellent Bishop Jewel made in a sermon, at St. Paul's Cross, in the year 1560. *If any learned man of all our adversaries, said the good Bishop, or if any learned men, who are alive, be able to bring any one sufficient sentence, out of any catholic doctor or father, or out of any old general council, or out of the holy scriptures of God, or any one example of the primitive church, whereby it may be clearly and plainly proved, that there was any private mass in the world at that time; or that the people were then taught to believe that Christ's body is really, substantially, corporally,*

really, carnally, or naturally in the sacrament; I promise them, that I will give over and subscribe to him. But I am well assured, that they shall never be able truly to allege one sentence; and because I know it, therefore I speak it, lest you haply should be deceived.

S O N.

If you please, Sir, we will now proceed to the mass.

F A T H E R.

I suppose you are heartily tired of this long, dry, and tedious argument; and, I must confess, I do not wonder you should; for it is like spending time to prove what every one knows. What our senses tell us to be true, we are ready to receive, and all argument here is folly and impertinence. In common cases, what must we think of a logician, who should spend a long time in proving, that twice two is not equal to six; or that a horse is not a man, or a man is not a horse. Such is the argument against *Transubstantiation*; and so stupid and senseless is the foundation of the Romish worship. But to proceed to the mass: The Church of Rome, having fixed it as an absolute certainty, that the real corporeal presence

of



of Christ is in the sacrament, the business of the mass is to consecrate, then to worship it, and to apply it to such occasions as it is intended for. You are to understand, that, in the account of Rome, the mass is a sacrifice, for having consecrated the wafers which they use instead of bread, and changed them into the real body of Christ. They offer him up on the altar as a sacrifice to the Eternal Father, at the great mass, for all mankind, the living and the dead; and at private masses, for those persons, and those sins, which are the particular occasion of them.

S O N.

What are the ceremonies of the mass?

F A T H E R.

The ceremonies of the mass are too numerous to go through; but in general it is to be observed, that there are various articles of dress worn by the priest, and various prayers which are always in Latin, and sometimes said and sometimes sung—they have incense, which they burn several times before consecration—they have various motions, bowings, and cringings, kissing the books, and kissing the altar—they frequently kneel, and rise up again, and go through such a multiplicity

multiplicity of ceremonies, it would be too tedious to relate. When they come to consecration, the priest pronounces in Latin the words of Christ, *This is my body*; and leaving the host on the altar, he kneels down and worships it; then, getting up, he takes it in his two hands, and holds it up as high as he can reach, to be beheld by the people, a little bell ringing all the time, to inform them, that it is consecrated. Then he leaves it again on the altar, and kneels down before it. Then, rising up, he takes the chalice, and having consecrated the wine, leaves it on the altar; and, after having made the same motions and bows as before, he lifts it up in the same manner as he had exalted the host.

## S O N.

This seems to me to be a strange sort of religion. These motions, gestures, bowings, and cringings, can do very little for the soul: there seems to be nothing in them which is calculated to enlighten the understanding, inform the judgment, or inspire the heart with real devotion.

## F A T H E R.

The apostle Paul tells us, that *bodily worship profiteth nothing*. But to proceed in our relation:

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After the priest has consecrated the host and the wine, he presents them on the altar as a sacrifice to God; and, kneeling down, says a prayer for all men in general, and all the souls in purgatory, but particularly for that person, or that soul, in purgatory, for whom the sacrifice of that mass is offered to God by Jesus Christ himself.

S O N.

By Jesus Christ himself! How can that be?

F A T H E R.

The catechism, published by the decree of the council of Trent, teaches, that the priest not only represents Jesus Christ, but, in the act of celebrating and consecrating, is really Jesus Christ himself.

S O N.

How absurd and blasphemous!

F A T H E R.

Those who join the communion of the Church of Rome, must not be too squeamish, but must swallow absurdity, blasphemy, and whatever the superiors of that religion choose to impose on them. The priest, having thus offered his pretended sacrifice, says some more Latin prayers;

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kneels down and rises up several times, sings another prayer, and, kneeling down to the bread, repeats three times what they call the *Agnus*, which in English is, *O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us*: and then rising up, eateth the host and drinketh the wine. After this several little punctilios are settled, and every thing put to rights about the altar; when the priest, having kneeled down and rose up, turns to the people, and says, The Lord be with you: when two or three more prayers, and part of St. John's gospel, end the mass; and the priest with his assistants returns to the vestry, saying a prayer for the souls in purgatory. Intermixed with the several parts of this service, are various crossings, which were too frequent to be related, and two prayers for the dead. The ceremonies, kneelings, motions, and gestures, are much the same for a public or private mass; but they are not so many in a mass for the dead.

S O N.

How many sorts of masses have they in the Church of Rome?

F A T H E R.

They have proper masses for the Holy Trinity, for Christ, for the Virgin Mary, for angels, apostles,



apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and for the dead.

S O N.

And what is the use of these masses?

F A T H E R.

These masses, as I have before observed, are considered as an acceptable sacrifice to the Eternal Father, and are offered by the priest on every occasion which may arise. Whoever will pay for it, may have a mass: and they are believed to be of such service to the living and the dead, that there is a great demand for this sort of church-ware, and vast sums are amassed by the clergy.

S O N.

The mass is a strange, busy, bustling affair; and to me, the priest and his two assistants, according to their own account of the matter, are like Herod, Pontius Pilate, and Caiaphas the high priest, who all joined together to crucify Christ.

F A T H E R.

As Christ on the cross, according to the apostle, *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, and

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the Romish Priests, according to their own account, are repeating the same, it seems something like what you have mentioned. But it ought to be remembered, that the apostle tells us, that *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many*: and as we must believe, that the sacrifice of Christ, once offered, was perfect, it needs no repetition. But as we have seen, that the pretence on which this sacrifice is founded is false, it is a certain fact, that it is no sacrifice at all: for as it has been proved, that the bread and wine after consecration remain bread and wine still, they cannot be a sacrifice, but an emblem or representation of the sufferings and death of Christ.

#### SON.

Is not the worshipping the bread and wine, kneeling down to it, and praying to it under the character of the Lamb of God, equally impious and stupid with the grossest idolatry of the Heathens?

#### FATHER.

I believe nothing was ever introduced into the world under the form of religious \* worship, more

\* Those who are desirous of examining the various religious ceremonies in the world, have now the best opportunity of such information,

more senseless than this. The Heathens carried their idolatry to the most abominable and amazing lengths; but when they worshipped stocks and stones, they were generally considered as the representations of their gods: but the Papists worship a wafer for a real Deity. The Heathens worshipped their images as emblems of subordinate deities: but the Papists approach their wafer with that adoration, and those honours, which are due only to the Supreme.

S O N.

I think you said, that the Romans made their mass a very gainful and acceptable sacrifice to themselves, however odious and abominable it may be to their Maker.

F A T H E R.

It is true, I have hinted as much; and when you have heard what a gainful trade has been driven with these masses, and what immense sums they have brought into the church, you will be surpris'd at the refined policy which introduced this imaginary deity.

information, there being at this time an accurate and elegant description of them, now publishing in six-penny numbers, with a set of fine copper-plates, executed by masterly hands, under the title of *THE RELIGIOUS RITES AND CEREMONIES OF ALL NATIONS*; written by the REV. DR. HUARD.

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S O N.

**S O N.**

What use do they make of their masses? and by what means are they employed as magnets, to draw such immense riches? This may be a gainful trade, but I fear it is not a very honorable one.

**F A T H E R.**

I have observed before, there are masses for the living, and masses for the dead. Any body may have a mass that will pay for it; or a mass for every day in the year, for as many years to come as he pleases. There are masses for success on any occasion; masses for communities, and masses for single persons; masses for recovery from sickness, and masses for the relief of their souls after death.

**S O N.**

If they believe there is any efficacy in these masses, it is easy to perceive, that there must be trade enough: but what is the price of them?

**F A T H E R.**

You are to be informed, that when a person is desirous to have a public mass, he applies to the clerk, and brings six large wax candles, to burn while his mass is saying; for which he gives a crown,



crown, and makes a present to the priest. When a club or any community want a mass for the success of their undertaking, they pay a crown, and make a feast for the priests, friars, and monks. But they make the most profit by their masses for the dead: for here sometimes they get vast sums of money; but the persons who pay, do not know that their masses are performed.

S O N.

By what means do they get such large orders on that occasion?

F A T H E R.

When any person who believes in the efficacy of these things, is sick, it is to be supposed that he will not be sparing of masses for his recovery; and when he is dead, his relations, in the first emotions of their grief, will part with their substance for the care of his soul. The priests watch these opportunities, and they find it answer their ends. It is said, that when the Marquis of St. Martin died, his lady ordered an hundred thousand masses to be said for his soul, for which she paid down five thousand pounds the same day; and that she ordered one thousand to be said every year for ever, for which she settled a thousand pistoles per annum on the churches and convents.

S O N.

S O N.

The Marchionefs of St. Martin had her masses very cheap: but she was a wholesale customer.

F A T H E R.

You plainly see, by this one instance, what a lucrative trade is carried on by the priests, and what prodigious sums may be supposed to be acquired by the mass-trade in nations which are trained up in superstition; and all methods are taken to inspire every individual with the utmost reverence for such things.

S O N.

But how can they say or sing so many masses?

F A T H E R.

For that you must take their words, except you will take the trouble upon you to be present at the performance of them. The priest will take the money, and give a receipt for so many masses to be said: but in some religious houses they have a stock on hand; and if any person in his will leaves money for a thousand masses to be said for the relief of his soul, they can take the money, and give a receipt for masses already said.

S O N.

SON.

I plainly see the reason why the Church of Rome is so fond of the idol which creates them so much advantage. Not Demetrius and the Craftsmen at Ephesus, would have been such losers by the destruction of the temple of Diana, as the Popish priests would be by the downfall of their host, and therefore it is no wonder that they take such pains to exalt it.

FATHER.

And yet, if reports are true, one would think they do not themselves esteem it so holy: for Mr. Gavin tells us, that it is common for priests to frequent the houses of the ladies of pleasure, and as they pretend to have no money, they pay the price of prostitution in masses; for these the courtezans take a receipt of the priest, and sell to those who want them.

SON.

This is an odd kind of a religious trade indeed: but I should imagine, that people who knew by what means these masses were obtained, would have but a very mean opinion of their holiness and efficacy.

FATHER.

FATHER.

The priests are at no loss how to settle that affair. You may remember, I informed you that it is believed, that the priest in consecration not only represents Jesus Christ, but is really Jesus Christ himself: therefore the mass is holy and pure, and is equally efficacious, let the priest be ever so lewd and wicked.

SON.

It is time we had done with the mass; let us now Sir, if you please, attend to the manner of receiving the Sacrament in the Church of Rome.

FATHER.

The Church of Rome hath corrupted and perverted the original mode of the institution of the Lord's Supper, by changing the bread into wafers, which they call the host, and denying the cup to the laity.

SON.

In what manner do they communicate.

FATHER.

There is a little tabernacle upon the altar where the consecrated wafers are deposited, and locked

up.

FATHER.



up. The priest having put on his ornaments goes to the altar, and having said the prayer of the sacrament openeth the *Sacrarium* or tabernacle, and taking out the cup which contains the wafers, he turns to the communicants, and taking one of them between the fore-finger and thumb of his right-hand, he lifts it up, and says, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.* This he repeats three times, and then goes to the communicants, and puts a wafer into each of their mouths; for it is supposed to be so holy, that they must not touch it with their fingers, When all have received, the priest puts the cup into the tabernacle, and goes into the vestry.

S O N.

What is the reason why the Church of Rome admits of communion in one kind only, why should the cup be denied to the laity?

F A T H E R.

It is certainly done to exalt the clergy, and support the ecclesiastical dignity.

S O N.

On what pretence is the cup withheld?

F A T H E R.

the consecrated host, and to convince the people

FATHER.

On a very frivolous one: A communicant once happened to spill the wine; and, to prevent such a profanation for the future, they thought fit to with-hold the cup from the laity; and, to satisfy their scruples, asserted, that there was a whole Christ contained in the bread. And when Christ presented the cup, and said, *Drink ye all of it*, they say, he meant only his apostles.

It is calculated to fill the common people with reverence and awe, and to the clergy to the

SON.

Could not the same be said of the bread, and that have been with-held on the like pretence?

and the clergy when they have but one

FATHER.

Doubtless it might: but the Church of Rome, does what she pleases; and when pinched by scripture, flies to tradition, and there she has room enough. Various arts are used to make the common people believe there is a most amazing holiness and virtue in the sacrament. You have heard how they carry it about the streets on certain days, with the utmost pomp and grandeur, as well as the utmost solemnity and awe. Never were any of the gods of the heathens, not Jupiter himself, their supreme deity, more devoutly worshipped. It would fill a volume to transcribe all the miracles, reported to have been wrought by

M

the

the consecrated host; and to convince the people that it is really God, it has been asserted, that priests of pure lives have seen the little boy Jesus in the wafer: but there are so few who answer the character, I suppose that prodigy is but rarely seen. Upon the whole, it may be observed, that the worship of the Church of Rome, and her doctrine respecting the sacrament is not more absurd and ridiculous, than impious and idolatrous. It is calculated to fill the common people with reverence and awe, and exalt the clergy to the utmost height. It is a sacrifice indeed; but it is the laity who sacrifice their reason and common sense, and the clergy when they have put out their eyes, take the opportunity to pick their pockets. Let us, therefore, make the best use of our rational powers; nor let any man persuade us out of our senses. Let us love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity: let us depend on him only, and never be cheated by any imaginary sacrifice for sin; always remembering, that *through the eternal spirit he offered himself without spot to God; and by ONE offering hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified. For Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

End of Dialogue IV.

M

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of the Church of Rome.  
be written in its defence; but if you please, we  
will now attend to the images of saints, which  
are carried about in their processions, and I have  
hesitated about in their processions, and I have  
hesitated about in their processions, and I have

DIALOGUE the FIFTH.

Of the Adoration of Saints and Angels; the  
Worship of Images and Pictures; and  
Veneration for Relics in the Church of  
Rome.

SON,

I HAVE carefully considered the subject of our  
last conversation, and I think the further we  
proceed in our enquiries into the worship and  
ceremonies of the Church of Rome, the more ab-  
surd, ridiculous, and abominable she appears. I  
am really amazed, that men in their senses should  
believe so strange a doctrine as Transubstantiation;  
But when I consider the profit it brings to the  
Church, I do not wonder that the priests use all  
their art and influence to support it; nor am I  
surprised, that so many learned volumes should  
be



be written in its defence; but if you please, we will now attend to the images of saints, which are carried about in their processions, and I have heard are set up and worshipped in their churches.

FATHER.

I suppose you have not forgot the image of the Virgin Mary, which I described in all her riches, finery, and grandeur?

SON.

No, Sir; but I want to be further informed. I have read of the different deities which were worshipped amongst the Heathens. They had their Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Minerva, Neptune, Mercury, Venus, Diana, Bacchus, Hercules, Pan, and a whole rabble of deities, with which their superstition disgraced the skies. These imaginary gods had images set up in their temples, and were worshipped with the profoundest adoration: but how such sort of worship came to be introduced into the Christian Church is very amazing.

FATHER.

And you will be more surpris'd, when I tell you, that some of these same images, which were set

set up and worshipped in the heathen temples, have been continued in the Christian Churches; but changed from the name of the deity they represented to that of some saint in the Roman calendar.

S O N.

If that be really the case, it is surprising indeed.

F A T H E R.

The heathen worship of images, in some instances, consisted in kissing them. Cicero tells us of a brazen statue of Hercules, the beard and chin of which, was worn off by frequent kissing; and some learned travellers have seen a brazen statue of St. Peter at Rome, the toes of which were worn off by the same practice. I suppose you have heard, that it has been esteemed an honor conferred on a king, to be admitted to kiss the Pope's feet.

S O N.

And I suppose the common people thought it an honor and happiness, to be admitted to kiss those of his statue.

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

But what is the most extraordinary, when these learned travellers came to examine this brazen statue of St. Peter, it bore such marks of antiquity, and such emblems, as convinced them, and all who were skilled in such kind of knowledge, that it had formerly been a statue of Jupiter in Pagan Rome.

SON.

This is an amazing discovery indeed: but what sort of veneration do the Papists pay to their saints?

FATHER.

The veneration of saints is a considerable article in the Romish Church; but you are to observe, that they are departed saints which she reveres. The Church of Rome takes care to behave in such a manner to the saints of God, that she is not suspected to have too much veneration for them, while they are living; so far from that, it is her known character to persecute and destroy them.

SON.

What veneration does she pay to the dead saints?

M 3

FATHER.

## FATHER.

Most of her saints are of her own making: for their names are not recorded in scripture. To the honor of these she erects temples and chapels; to these she dedicates altars; and appoints holidays to be celebrated in remembrance of them: she admits of vows being made to them, and solemn praises paid to them for mercies received: she offers sacrifice to God for the honor of the saints, particularly the sacrifice of the mass, already explained. The Papists place a confident hope and trust in their saints; and in consequence call upon them, not only as intercessors, but immediate protectors from all evil; and the liberal distributors of all blessings, both of grace and glory. And besides this, they pay a stupid and superstitious regard to what they call their relics, which are their bodies, dry bones, old rags of their clothes, or any thing reported to have been theirs: and to encourage and enforce this superstitious veneration, the images and pictures of the saints are set up in the Roman Catholic churches; the people kneel down before them, pray unto them, and shew plain marks of the highest love, and profoundest reverence and adoration.



SON,

At what period was the worship of images introduced into the Church?

FATHER.

The worship of saints and angels, is so contrary to the express command of God, to our natural notions of things, and the plain precepts of the gospel, that it cannot be supposed to be introduced all at once. The first appearance of any thing like this, was at the latter end of the fourth century; and it increased by degrees: but it does not appear that any public prayers were put up to saints, till this kind of worship was established by the second Council of Nice in the year 787.

SON.

I suppose, when this idolatry was established by authority, it gained by swift degrees: but on what occasion was it first introduced?

FATHER.

You may remember, it hath been before related, that in the first three hundred years there were ten terrible heathen persecutions, and many of the fathers of the Church sealed their testimony of  
the

the truth with their blood. Amongst these, there were numbers of men of great learning and piety, who were eminent in their profession, and as such their names were transmitted to posterity. It is very natural to suppose, that the Christian world should have a great respect for the memories of such men, and that their names should be often mentioned. This at first was no more than recording their names and their actions with honor, and proposing their virtues for imitation. It afterwards proceeded to visiting their tombs, and praying among the mournful mansions of the dead saints, that the solemnity of the place, and the exemplary life, and cruel death of the martyrs, might inspire a contempt of the world, and a more sedate and fervent devotion: this practice by degrees began to be more superstitious; and, at last, proceeded to adorations and prayers to the deceased worthies.

## S O N.

But by what means did these worthies become canonized for saints, and have days fixed for their festivals?

## F A T H E R.

When this kind of worship was established by the Council of Nice, they soon found a sufficient

number

number of saints to fill half the calendar, and find fresh work for the encreasing superstition of the age. The method of canonizing a saint is as follows:

The person to be sainted must have the character of extraordinary sanctity in his life. There must be evidence of miracles wrought by him: the Pope must be certified of all this; and often there is a petition sent to his Holiness from the prince, whose subject the candidate-saint was; or from some people of chief account in the realm, desiring, that such a person may be received into the catalogue of saints, and decreed to be worshipped as a saint. Now, if it be for the Pope's and the Holy Church's interest to hearken to this motion, a great deal of preparation is made for the sacred ceremony; a stage is built, large enough to contain a chapel with an altar, and a pontifical throne. The image of the saint is exposed and carried before the people; and after a world of pageantry, suitable to the occasion, the Pope proceeds to the work in hand; and having prayed before an altar, he makes a speech, in which he gives them an account of the life and miracles of this saint: then the litany is sung, and the proctor, who is agent in this affair, earnestly requests the Pope, in the name of such a prince or such a people, that he would declare blessed *N.* to be enrole

enrolled in the calendar of saints: whereupon the Pope utters, with a loud voice, these words: *To the honor of the holy and undivided Trinity, the exaltation of the Catholic Faith, and the increase of the Christian religion; by the authority of the omnipotent God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and by our own, with the advice of our brethren, We decree and ordain, N. of blessed memory, to be a saint, and to be received into the catalogue of saints; and we do admit him into this catalogue, and appoint, that every year, on such a day, his feast and office be solemnly and devoutly celebrated, by the universal Church.* After this, the Pope begins *Te Deum*, and then a deacon on his right hand saith, *Pray for us, O blessed N.!*

### S. O. N.

And what kind of worship or adoration do they pay to these saints?

### FATHER.

The Church of Rome seems to have borrowed her theology from the Pagans, and therefore she has a great number of saints and saintesses, who answer to the gods and goddesses in the heathen world. And as the several nations of the earth were supposed to be under the dominion of different gods or goddesses in the heathen system,



system, so the several kingdoms, are by the Romans assigned to the lot of different saints. There was a time, when England was supposed to be under the protection of St. George; Scotland was taught to apply for help to St. Andrew; and Ireland to St. Patrick: besides these, they have St. James for Spain; St. Martin for Germany; St. Dennis for France; St. Nicholas for Muscovy; and St. Peter and St. Paul for the territories of Rome. The Church of Rome hath also different saints for different disorders, to whom they are directed to address their prayers for assistance: they have St. Anthony for inflammations; St. Petronilla for the ague; St. Sigismund for fevers; St. Margarita for help in child-bearing; St. Roch for the plague and infectious disorders; St. Apollonia for the tooth-ach; St. Lucia for sore eyes; and St. Otalia for deafness. Further, they have saints, who preside over particular trades and employments; St. Catharine for the spinsters, as well as the scholars; St. Austin for the divines; St. Luke for the painters; St. Crispin for the shoemakers; and even the prostitutes have their peculiar saints, as St. Magdalen and St. Atrah.

S O N.

And what kind of adoration do they pay to these saints?

FATHER.

FATHER.

They pray to these saints with equal fervency and the same shew of devotion, as they do to God himself. Their addressees to them are attended with the same solemnity, carried on at the same times, and mixed with the religious worship they pay to God. The supplicants to saints are in the devoutest postures, either kneeling or prostrate on the ground, and shew all the signs of the warmest and most fervent devotion, and to their saints they direct their prayers for those blessings, which none but God can give.

SON.

I remember when the prophet Jonah was in a storm, and the ship in danger of sinking, the mariners each cried unto his god. Suppose a papist had been amongst them, to whom would he have directed his petition, according to the rules of his Church?

FATHER.

To St. Nicholas.

SON.

And how do the advocates for their religion vindicate this conduct from the charge of idolatry?

FATHER.

FATHER.

They pretend not to ascribe supreme honors to the saints and angels, but only reverence them with inferior honors; and that they only pray to them to entreat their intercession and prayers.

SON.

And is not the presenting petitions to, and worshipping subordinate or mediatory deities chargeable with the crime of idolatry?

FATHER.

Most certainly it is; and most of the gross idolatry of the Heathens was of this kind. They had but one supreme deity, which was Jupiter; and all the rest of their whole rabble of gods, were supposed to be subordinate, mediatory deities, like the saints in Papal Rome.

SON.

But is it true, that the petitions which the Papists put up to the saints, are only to desire an interest in their prayers?

FATHER.

Whoever is at the pains of perusing their books of devotion, will soon be convinced, that they

N

petition

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petition their saints for those blessings which only God can give; and, therefore, cannot possibly clear themselves from the charge of ascribing divine honors to a creature. In some of these books, St. Peter is addressed with the warmest devotion, and desired to untie the bonds of their iniquity, and open the gates of heaven to them. And the other saints are addressed with petitions to illuminate their minds, furnish them with all grace, protect them from the power of the devil, comfort them under all troubles, bless them with health of body, vigor of mind, and peace of conscience, and finally, that they will deliver them from hell, and raise them to the joys of heaven.

S O N.

These most certainly are petitions which ought to be addressed only to God; and it must be gross idolatry to present them to any other.

F A T H E R.

To make the idolatry and impiety of the Church of Rome most incontestably manifest, we need only take a view of the worship and adoration which they pay to the Virgin Mary, and the horrid blasphemies with which she is adored. She



is stiled, the mother of mercy, queen of heaven, fountain of compassion; the vein of pardon, the hope of the world; the sure refuge of the distressed, the cause of all creatures; the fountain of all blessings, the author of salvation, the sovereign light of the world, and the inexhaustible fountain of all good. Most of these characters belong to God alone, and cannot, without the most horrid blasphemy, be ascribed to any creature.

S O N.

I perceive the strength and fervor of their devotion, and the high notions they conceive of this goddess of theirs, are equal to the grandeur and magnificence of the temples they have built, and the richness of the ornaments, with which her image is decorated.

F A T H E R.

That they may not be thought wanting in respect to this favorite deity of theirs, they tell us, that God hath given her half his kingdom; that no favors are granted here on earth, but what pass through her hands; it is she that procures the expiation of our sins; and it is through her prayers that our souls are cleansed: and one of their writers says, it is morally impossible, that any who have

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have a true devotion for this good lady can be damned. Further, in the mass-book, printed at Paris, 1634, this petition is to be found addressed to her, *O empress, and our most kind lady, by the authority of a mother, command thy beloved son.*

S O N.

That is a bold stroke indeed!

F A T H E R.

There is a devotional book of theirs, filed *Our Lady's Psalter*, where the Psalms of David are addressed to the Virgin Mary, the name of God being erased, and that of the Lady substituted in its stead. This was printed under public licence, by the command of Pope Sextus the fifth; and the blasphemous author hath since been canonized, and stands in the list of the Romish saints; and another of their saints declares, That the Virgin's reply to the angel Gabriel's salutation, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word*, was so highly meritorious, that she has done more for God, than God for her and all mankind; and that men may say to their comfort, that upon the Virgin's account, God is more obliged to them than they are to him.

S O N.

S O N.

Such horrid impiety and blasphemy are more likely to come from the infernal regions, than from the mouth of a saint.

F A T H E R.

The impious and idolatrous veneration they have for their goddess Mary, is further manifest by the number of the prayers addressed to her. Their rosary, which they pretend the Virgin herself inspired, and delivered to St. Dominic about the year 1220, contains one hundred and fifty prayers to the Virgin Mary, and only fifteen to God: and for your amusement I shall present you with one of these prayers: \* *Thrice sacred Virgin Mary, mother of God, I N. N. though most unworthy to be registered amongst your servants, yet moved by that goodness the angels admire in you to an ardent desire of honoring, loving, and serving you, do here this day, with all possible humility, sincerity, and devotion, in the presence of my guardian angel, and the whole court of heaven, make choice of you for my singular lady, advocate, and mother; firmly purposing to honor, love, and serve you, with all filial duty, diligence, and fidelity; and to procure, as much as shall lie in my*

\* Rosary, page 36.

power, that all others may do the same: I therefore most heartily beseech you, most merciful and compassionate mother, by the precious blood which your dearly beloved Son, my blessed Saviour, shed for me in his bitter passion, that you will be graciously pleased to receive and admit me into the number of your devout clients, as one dedicated to your perpetual service. Grant furthermore, O my good and gracious mother, that I may never forget you, and forfeit this my now made promise or vow, of honouring, loving, and serving you all the days of my life; that so I may never be forgotten, forsaken, or abandoned by you; but be always aided, protected, and assisted by you, especially in the hour of my death. And for the more regularly saying these prayers, they have invented strings of beads, ten small ones for the prayers to the Virgin, and one larger for that to God.

## S O N.

I am very much surpris'd at this *Mary-worship*, and must certainly conclude, that the Mary of the Romanists is the greatest idol in the world.

## F A T H E R.

They have exalted this goddess of theirs, and given her a name above every name. Their books

of



of devotion to her, contain the most horrid blasphemies: they make her more compassionate and powerful than Jesus Christ himself: they have composed a bible for her, which concludes with these words: *O Queen of mercy, grace, and glory, Empress of all the creatures, blot out all my transgressions, and lead me to life everlasting.* And some have gone so far as to make Jesus Christ himself plead the Virgin's merit, and to say on the cross, "Save me for her great merit sake, who said, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord!*" "Give me also that kingdom which she hath deserved, and which devolves to me as being her son."

# S O N.

Are the saints whom the Romans have canonized, always saints indeed? I think one may conclude, from the above account, that some of them may be numbered in the list of sinners.

# F A T H E R.

There are some amongst them who were men of great learning and piety, whose names are worthy of honor and respect, on account of their exemplary virtue, and the service their labors have been of to mankind: but there are others

on

on the Roman list, whose names ought to be branded with eternal reproach, on account of their pride, cruelty, and other vices: witness St. Dominic, whose name will be ever abhorred on account of his being the author of that infernal tribunal the inquisition. And what sort of a saint do you imagine the famous Thomas à Becket to be? This man was full of pride and treachery: he was a rebel to his king, and a traitor to his country; but being a bigot to the church, he was raised to the dignity of a saint, and was the idol of this country for about two hundred years. We are told in history, that in the cathedral church of Canterbury were three altars, one dedicated to Christ, another to the Virgin Mary, and a third to St. Thomas à Becket; the offering at whose shrine came to about a thousand pounds, when those to the Virgin Mary amounted to no more than five, and to Christ nothing at all. We are told by a noted historian, that there were no less than fifty thousand foreigners came on pilgrimage, to pay their homage to this tomb; so that the Church of Rome has no reason to reproach the heathen world for worshipping demons; for she may match them with some of her saints.

FATHER

SON,

**S O N.**  
I have heard enough of this impious and abominable worship: but I think you said, that angels too were the objects of the Romish adoration.

**F A T H E R.**

Indeed they are: the catechism set out by order of the council of Trent, saith, "That the angels are to be invoked, because they perpetually behold the face of God, and freely undertake the defence of our salvation." And accordingly, they do not forget them in their sacred offices: one of their prayers runs thus: "Holy Michael, be thou to me a breast-plate! Holy Gabriel, be thou to me a helmet! Holy Raphael, be thou to me a buckler! Holy Uriel, be thou to me a defender! Holy Cherubim, be thou to me health! Holy Seraphim, be to me truth! And all ye holy angels and archangels, keep, protect, and defend me, and bring me to eternal life!"

**S O N.**

On what pretence does the Church of Rome worship angels?

**F A T H E R.**

## FATHER.

She pretends only to invoke them as intercessors : but this is only a pretence. The above example shews, that they pray to them for those gifts which only God can bestow ; and, of consequence, give them that homage which is only due to him. Nor would their pretence of worshipping the angels only as intercessors, excuse them from the charge of idolatry : for the Heathens worshipped most of their gods as subordinate deities, and frequently applied to them as intercessors for them. Besides, the worshipping angels as intercessors, is an impious insult on the intercession of Christ.

## SON.

But was it not enough for the Church of Rome to worship such a number of deities of her own making, to dedicate temples, and appoint festivals for them, without setting up images, in order to make this worship the more acceptable to the Pagans ?

## FATHER.

The worshipping images is the natural consequence of the adoration of false gods ; and I believe it always prevailed. The Pagans could not have



have kept the ideas of their deities in the minds of the people, without some corporeal resemblance of them. Idol worship is too gross to subsist without something of this kind: and, doubtless, most of the Romish saints had sunk into oblivion long ago, had there been no images of them.

S O N.

And are the images canonized too?

F A T H E R.

The images are consecrated with a great deal of solemnity; and this consecration is a curiosity worthy your notice. The Bishop who officiates on this occasion, presents the following prayer to the true God: *Almighty and everlasting God, who forbiddest not the representations and images of thy saints, we beseech thee vouchsafe to bless and sanctify this image, adapted to the honor and memory of blessed N. thy confessor, martyr, or bishop; and grant, that whosoever shall endeavour to honor thy glorious confessor before this image, may, by his prayers and assistance, obtain of thee grace in this present world, and eternal glory in the world to come.* And at the conclusion, the Bishop sprinkles the image with holy water: and hereupon,

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upon, it being thus made holy, it is not only adorned in a very glorious manner, by the zeal of their votaries, but they kiss it, uncover the head, bow and fall before it: all which is allowed by the council of Trent.

S O N.

Such practices are so gross, and manifestly idolatrous, that I wonder they could ever be admitted into the church.

F A T H E R.

It is a great piece of devotion with the Papists, to say their prayers before the consecrated stocks and stones, and sometimes their forms run as though they prayed to the images themselves: for instance, "Hail, holy face, impressed in cloth, "purge us from every spot of vice, and join us "to the society of the blessed: bring us, O "blessed figure! to behold the undefiled face of "Christ." And for the encouragement of this sort of devotion, there are promises made of very great rewards to the pious and persevering worshippers. Whoever, they say, being in the state of grace, shall say seven *Ave Marias* before an image of piety, shall merit a pardon for fifty-six thousand years. The security for this must not be

be doubted; for it was granted by three Popes. And in the rosary of the blessed Virgin, an indulgence is granted to those who, by reason of sickness, are unable to visit the altar of the rosary, provided they shall say the prayers before some devout picture.

You have seen what a prodigious number of images of saints are in the Romish churches and convents; and I have informed you of the high veneration in which they are held, and the idolatrous worship which is paid to them: but it yet remains to be remarked, that several of the Papist doctors have declared, that the same reverence is due to the image as to the person it represents. Thus the image of Christ is to be revered as much as Christ himself; and the same by the images or pictures of their saints.

S O N.

If this is not gross idolatry, I cannot tell what idolatry is: but please, Sir, to give me a short account of the crosses, crucifixes, and beads, used by the Papists.

F A T H E R.

The crosses and crucifixes are designed to assist their devotion, and are worshipped with the same  
O  
veneration

re-  
 veneration as the images of their saints; and the  
 beads are to assist them in keeping a just account  
 of the number of their prayers.

S O N.

Are the crosses, crucifixes, and beads, conse-  
 crated?

F A T H E R.

They are all consecrated, and esteemed holy.  
 Whoever attends to the consecration of a new  
 cross or picture, will perceive, that the Church  
 of Rome pretends to put so much virtue into  
 these things, as may justify the worshipping them.  
 The bishop at the consecration uses this prayer:  
 " We beseech thee, O Almighty and Everlasting  
 " God, that it may please thee to bless this sign  
 " of the cross, that it may be a saving remedy to  
 " mankind: let it be the solidity of faith, profi-  
 " ciency of good works, and redemption of souls;  
 " let it be comfort, protection, and a safeguard  
 " against the cruel darts of the enemy." At the  
 close of all, the bishop (as well he may) kneel-  
 ing before the cross, most devoutly adores and  
 kisses it. As to the consecration of the beads, I  
 am informed, that after some short prayers and  
 responses, the mass-priest prays, " That to the  
 " honor



"honor and praise of his Son's mother, God  
"would be pleased to infuse into these beads, so  
"much strength of the Holy Ghost, that whoso-  
"ever shall carry them abroad, or reverently  
"keep them at home, and devoutly pray by them,  
"may abound in all grace; may be protected  
"every where against all enemies, and at last may  
"be presented, full of good works, unto God by  
"the blessed Virgin."

**S O N.**

"I perceive that every thing is holy which be-  
"ongs to the worship of the Church of Rome:  
"how grossly are the poor people imposed on?

**F A T H E R.**

"Before we conclude the account of the manner of  
"worship in the Church of Rome, it is proper to take  
"notice of the precious relics, which are so much  
"esteemed. The council of Trent, which allows  
"and commands the worship of images, is very  
"clear and full in commanding the veneration  
"in which these holy relics should be held. They  
"tell us, the sacred bodies of the martyrs, and  
"others living with Christ, which were his mem-  
"bers, and temples of the Holy Ghost, ought to  
"be revered by the faithful; and in express  
"words,

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words, they declare all damned, who deny that honor and adoration.

S O N.

What sort of trumpery are these precious relics?

F A T H E R.

Mr. Ducdale, in his history of St. Paul's, gives us an inventory of the precious relics there. As for instance, a vessel of chrystal, with two ribs of St. Lawrence in it: a chrystal vessel, containing some relics of St. Swithin, Cosmus, and Damianus, the sepulchre of our Lord, St. Mary, Mount Calvary, &c. a chrystal cup, containing the hairs of the Blessed Virgin, and the hand of St. John the evangelist: a vessel of chrystal containing some of St. Paul's blood: a chrystal vessel containing two pieces of the head of St. Thomas the Martyr, and some of his hair and garment: a chrystal vessel, containing some of the garments, milk, and hair of the Blessed Virgin: the head of St. Athelbert, king and martyr, in a silver and gilt box: the cheek of St. Athelbert, with four teeth only remaining in it, in a silver and gilt box, enriched with precious stones: a vessel of jasper, with

with some of the wood of St. Andrew's cross: a box of ivory, with the relics of St. Austin: another ivory box, with the relics of St. Agnes: a silver gilt cross with the crucifix: St. Mary and St. John, having on their heads some of the wood of the holy cross: this must be inestimable.

## S O N.

These grinning skulls and dead mens bones are very odd kind of curiosities. Such objects of veneration might be multiplied without number: but can there be any religion in this?

## F A T H E R.

The council of Trent not only commends visiting the places where this precious treasure is deposited; but honors all who are zealous in this sort of religion; and by the account before given of the tomb of Becker, you may judge what a trade these pious remains gave rise to. Thousands of silly souls have by this means been drawn from remotest parts of the kingdom; and having visited the miracle-working relics, have been sent home loaded with pardons, indulgences, protections against the devil, and such like church treasure: but their pockets were as empty of money, as

their heads were full of the miracles wrought by the saint, whose holy relics they had visited.

S O N.

And are miracles also ascribed to these relics?

F A T H E R.

You may remember, that when Elisha the prophet was dead and buried, a dead man was hastily cast into his grave, who no sooner touched the bones of the prophet than he revived. This text is quoted by the defenders of wonder-working relics; and it well may be supposed, when the relic trade began, that it would increase and multiply. It would be incredible, were I to relate, how many volumes have been stuffed with the miracles of the saints; and you need not doubt but their relics have come in for their share.

S O N.

I should not be very forward in believing that these relics are real.

F A T H E R.

When such a wide field is opened for deception, it is no wonder, that fraud prevails, especially

when

FATHER.



when there is no possibility of that fraud's being detected. This is the case with respect to relics; and, no doubt, frauds have been multiplied. Historians inform us, that when the teeth of St. Apollonia were called in, in the reign of king Edward the sixth, there were so many that they weighed a ton.

S O N.

The more we enquire into the manner of worship of the Church of Rome, the more reason there is to conclude, that it is most deplorably corrupted.

F A T H E R.

Before we conclude our enquiries on this subject, there are two articles which require our attention, which are privileged altars and images. A privileged altar is one, to which the Pope has granted a privilege of such a nature, that whosoever says such and such prayers before it, obtains remission of his sins, or taketh a soul out of purgatory; and whosoever orders a mass to be said at that altar, taketh that very soul out of purgatory, for which the mass is said: so the priests report, and so the people believe.

S O N.

And what is a privileged image?

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

The cardinals, patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and bishops, can grant to any image forty days of full and free indulgence, and various pardons for those who visit the image, and say such a prayer before it as they appointed, when the privilege was granted. This privilege is not confined to the images in the churches, but often extended to those that stand at the corner of the streets, or on the highway. Such is the religion of the Church of Rome; and by such means the attention of her votaries is diverted from the supreme object of all religious worship and adoration, and fixed on gold and silver statues, on stocks and stones, dry bones, rotten teeth, and old rags.

SON.

Surely the idol-worship of the Pagan world was not so much diversified, as that of the Church of Rome: but how do the superiors of her clergy explain the second commandment?

FATHER.

The Papists have so great an aversion to the second commandment, that they frequently leave it out of their catechisms and manuals; for they

do

do not think it convenient, that people should see so plain a law of God against so constant a practice of the Church.

SON.

Is the worshipping of saints and angels, as well as the images of them, forbidden in the scriptures?

FATHER.

When the inhabitants of Lystra were desirous of worshipping Paul and Barnabas, and the priest of Jupiter, with this view, brought oxen and garlands to the gates of the city, the holy men resolutely opposed it, *Sirs, said the apostle Paul, why do ye these things, we also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God: and when the great apostle and evangelist St. John fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who had related such wonderful things, the bright native of the heavenly world, would not admit of his adoration. See thou, do it not, said he, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book, WORSHIP GOD.*

SON,

S O N.

And respecting the departed saints, is there any reason to suppose, that they know the affairs of the world, or are acquainted with the circumstances of those who address them in their prayers?

F A T H E R.

We know so little of the spiritual world, that we can have no assurance that this is the case. The extent of the intelligence of spiritual beings, lies out of the reach of our discernment; but we know that they are not present in all places; and therefore it is very unlikely they should hear the prayers of their votaries: how near the place of their residence may be to this globe, we know not; but Job speaking of the state of the dead, tells us, *his sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.*

S O N.

And as to the adoration of crosses and relics, I do not remember to have found any account of it in the bible; so that I think we may pronounce the whole of the Romish worship to be unscriptural, superstitious, and abominable; and conclude, that



that she is most notoriously guilty of *teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.*

**FATHER.**

Let us, before we conclude the conference, take a short view of the Roman worship. How absurd are the various bowings, cringings, kissings, and crossing, in the celebrating of the mass! With what idolatrous adorations is the host regarded, being believed to be the eternal God himself! With what pomp and splendor is the Virgin Mary exalted to supreme deity, and worshipped as the empress of the skies! What numbers of angels are invoked; and what a croud of saints stand in the catalogue of Rome, whose names are unknown in the word of God! How many saints stand in the Roman list, who, in Christ's account, are notorious sinners and while their images are worshipping on earth, their souls are burning in hell. What an incredible number of images are erected, composed of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone: with how much solemnity are these impious statues dedicated; and with what reverence do the admiring crouds bow down and worship them! What an enormous heap of dry bones, skulls, and disgusting trumpery, receive the Roman veneration;

veneration; and with what eagerness have the pious members of that church travelled to distant kingdoms to pay their devotions to dead mens bones, dirty rags, and rotten wood. Deliver us, O thou great God of the universe, thou one supreme eternal First Cause of all things, from the blindness and folly of such superstition! and enable us, by thy spirit, to *worship thee in spirit and in truth.*

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Y OU will be surpris'd, Sir, when I tell you what an effect the subject of our last conversation had on my mind. Such a readiness of objects of religious devotion, instead of being forgot, and really I could not get them out of my head all last night. I was continually dreaming of vast cathedrals, marble monuments, sumptuous tombs, images, urns, with a great variety of crosses, crucifixes, pillars, fountains, and processions after processions, without end.

F A T H E R.

I do not wonder that the account of the Rites which worship should have such an effect on your imagination;

**DIALOGUE the SIXTH.**  
*Of Scripture and Tradition, or the Rules of  
Faith in the Church of Rome.*

S O N.

**Y**OU will be surpris'd, Sir, when I tell you what an effect the subject of our last conversation had on my mind. Such a medley of objects of religious veneration I never heard of before, and really I could not get them out of my head all last night. I was confusedly dreaming of vast cathedrals, marble monuments, sumptuous tombs, images, urns, with a great variety of crosses, crucifixes, priests, friars, nuns, and procession after procession, without end.

F A T H E R.

I do not wonder that the account of the Romish worship should have such an effect on your  
P imagination;

imagination: it is all calculated to that end. But tell me, can you perceive any one thing among it all, which tends to enlighten the understanding?

## S O N.

I cannot perceive that any part of their worship hath any such tendency. But after I had been confusedly puzzling all night, and the above objects had crouded on my mind, in various combinations, I had a very remarkable dream. I thought I beheld a vast pair of scales, which hung from the concave of heaven down to the earth; and I looked, till I saw a number of priests bringing their holy garments, their consecrated host, their images of the Virgin Mary, with all her finery, their crosses, their crucifixes, the images of their saints, with all their silver candlesticks, wax candles, and urns full of relics: all this religious trumpery they carefully placed in one scale, and a wonderful heap it was: and I beheld, at the top, they laid the Pope's triple crown and his keys. When they had placed all these things in their order in the scale, they fell down and worshipped them, and watched them with the profoundest veneration, muttering their prayers and counting their beads, till a plain young man brought a little book, which seemed to be



the New Testament. This he laid down in the other scale, and all the prodigious load of trumpery immediately flew up, and seemed lighter than vanity.

FATHER.

Your dream was very remarkable and true. The New Testament is of more value, than all the religious trumpery in the world.

SON.

But what is their opinion of the scriptures? I suppose they do not make them the rule of their faith and practice. I have read my bible several times over, but I cannot find any command or example in the New Testament for such sort of worship.

FATHER.

The Roman Catholics do not deny the scriptures to be true; but they reserve the explanation of them to themselves; the common people are not permitted to read them, and their religious worship is carried on in an unknown tongue.

SON.

But on what foundation do they presume to introduce so many ceremonies into their worship,

which are not to be found in the New Testament?

**FATHER:** proper and still write but report them the Romanists pretend.

These things have their foundation in tradition; which, they would have us believe, is of equal authority with the written word. They pretend, that several ceremonies which were proper to be regarded in the church, were not written, but were delivered by the Apostles in conversation with the first Christians; and so have been handed down from one age to another.

**SON:** Various strong and striking points of resemblance might be traced between the phar-

But is not this a very uncertain and dubious rule of conduct?

**FATHER:** Concerning the former, counter of the gospel. Christ concludes that they had made void the law.

Nothing is more doubtful and uncertain than tradition, nor capable of greater corruption. By this the scribes and pharisees corrupted the law of Moses; and by tradition the Romanists have corrupted the gospel of Christ. The pharisees had, in our Saviour's time, so many traditions, that it is reported they filled twelve folio volumes; and I suppose the traditions of the Church of Rome would fill twenty. The pharisees reported of extraordinary purity and holiness of life, and

ported, that Moses received their traditions from the mouth of God himself, while he was forty days in the mount, and the prophet did not write, but report them: the Romanists pretend, that their traditions were received from the apostles, and handed down from one generation to another from them. The pharisees pretended, their traditions were of equal authority with the written word; and by these they made void the law: the Romanists pretend to the same; and by their traditions they have wretchedly corrupted, and in a manner made void the gospel of Christ. Various strong and striking points of resemblance might be traced between the pharisees of old, who were the great corrupters of the law, and the Church of Rome, which is the great corrupter of the gospel. Concerning the former, Christ concludes, that they had *made void the law by their traditions*; and he charges them with a scrupulous exactness in small matters, such as *paying tithes of mint, anise, and cummin*, while they neglected *the weightier matters of the law*. And with what justice and propriety might the same charges be exhibited against the latter?

So I suppose the reason of the Church. I remember the pharisees made vast pretences of extraordinary purity and holiness of life, and

depended on their good works, as the grounds of divine acceptance; while, notwithstanding all the shew they made, they were privately guilty of the most scandalous vices: and it is well if that is not the case with some of the Romish zealots. But as the Church of Rome presumes to impose her traditions on the Christian world, and to establish rites and ceremonies which have no foundation in scripture, on what authority does she do this? and who gave her that authority?

FATHER.

She assumes a very high authority, and advances her traditions on no less a claim than infallibility.

SON.

I suppose that infallibility is lodged in the Pope.

FATHER.

I believe the Romans would be glad to have it so: but some of their Popes have been so wicked, and there hath been so much confusion and contradiction amongst them, that they have not been able to maintain their claim; and, therefore, have thought proper to shift their ground, and say, that their church is infallible.

SON.



**S O N.**

And where is that infallibility lodged?

**F A T H E R.**

The Romans themselves are very much divided in their opinions about it. Some say, it is to be found in his Holiness the Pope: others place it in their general councils: a third sort contend, that this infallibility is neither in council nor Pope alone, but when the first hath received the assent of the last: and a fourth opinion is, that neither Pope nor councils, nor both together, are infallible, till their determination has received the assent of the universal church.

**S O N.**

I am afraid this infallibility is no where to be found.

**F A T H E R.**

The Church of Rome will tell you, that she is sure she has it; but it is very unfortunate for her, that she does not know where to find it. If her Popes and her councils were to be separately and distinctly examined, it would be found, that they are far from infallibility: for there is Pope against Pope, and council against council; and to search

for infallibility amongst them, would be like searching for the philosopher's stone.

To bind and enforce the belief of  
 S O N  
 whatever the pleasure to himself with the least

And on the strength of this pretended infallibility, does the Church of Rome presume to put down the scriptures, and

F A T H E R.

She assumes a right to fix the canon of scripture; and when she has done that, to put what sense upon it she pleases. *The doctrine of their church, they tell us, is the express word of God, and whatever is taught against the sense and consent of the church, is the express word of the devil.*

Such was the language of Cardinal Hosius, the Pope's legate at the council of Trent: and, to dishonour the scriptures as much as possible, they tell us, that they are not the rule of faith alone; because several necessary articles are either not at all contained in scripture, or at least are not plain in the scripture, without the help of tradition.

S O N  
 are forbidden to use the

According to this rule, I find the Church of Rome holds the power of imposing whatever she pleases on her members as articles of faith.

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

Indeed she does; and enforces the belief of whatever she pleases to advance, with the severest penalties. She thunders out her anathemas against all who dare oppose her; and you must swallow her absurdities, and not presume to scruple, on pain of damnation.

SON.

This is severe indeed!

FATHER.

And to keep the world in absolute subjection, and hold an uncontrollable dominion over the faith of mankind, the Church of Rome has presumed to prohibit the reading of the scriptures, and to order divine service to be performed in an unknown tongue. The council of Trent having left it to the Pope, to prohibit the reading of what books he pleased; in the fourth rule of his Holiness's index of prohibited books, all persons are forbidden to use the scriptures in the vulgar tongue, without a particular licence; and whoever presumes to do it, is not to receive absolution unless he first gives up his bible.

SON,

**S O N.**  
 It seems very plain to me, that the Church of Rome with-holds the scriptures from the vulgar, from a consciousness of their contradicting her favorite tenets.

**F A T H E R.**

Having assumed an unjust, arbitrary, and cruel dominion over the consciences of men, she takes every method to support and maintain her unrighteous tyranny and oppression: and as the holy scriptures, if carefully perused, would enlighten the minds of mankind, and shew them the true method of gospel worship, the Church of Rome thinks proper to keep them out of the hands of the common people, lest they should be too wise to submit their consciences to her determination.

**S O N.**

On what pretence does the Church of Rome forbid the reading of the scriptures to the common people?

**F A T H E R.**

She pretends that the scriptures are so mysterious, that they cannot be understood by the unlearned, and that they are likely to do them  
 more



more harm than good, and urges the words of the apostle Peter, who says, that in his brother Paul's epistles are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction: and hence the Church of Rome concludes, that the scriptures are not sufficiently clear in all points wherein our salvation is concerned, but that the misunderstanding and misinterpreting them may endanger our salvation.

every method to support and maintain her un-  
 righteous tyranny and pretension; and as the

But is not all that is necessary to salvation  
 clearly revealed in the New Testament?

THE true method of gospel worship, the Church  
 of Rome thinks to keep them out of the

The Protestants believe, that all scripture is

given by inspiration of God; is profitable for doc-

trine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction

in righteousness, that the man of God may be per-

fect, thoroughly furnished to all good works. The

great Redeemer exhorted the Jews to search the

scriptures: in them, says he, ye think ye have eter-

nal life; and they are they that testify of me. And

the apostles commended the Bereans, because

they received the word with all readiness of mind,  
 and searched the scriptures daily, to see if those

things  
 learned, and that they are likely to do them

more

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things were so; but the Pope it seems is wiser than the apostles, and takes upon him to forbid what Christ hath commanded.

S O N.

But what are the things which the apostle Peter refers to in St. Paul's epistles, which are hard to be understood?

F A T H E R.

Whatever these things may be, it is certain they are not necessary to salvation, for whatever concerns the eternal interest of man is plainly revealed, and brought down to the capacity of a child in the sacred volume of inspiration. The apostle Paul tells Timothy, *From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus*; but the Church of Rome would have told him, that these same scriptures were dangerous things, and were very likely to lead him to hell.

S O N.

So then the Church of Rome, having put down the scriptures, takes the opportunity to establish her own traditions, and do whatever she pleases in religion.

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

The council of Trent has declared, that the oral traditions of the Catholic Church are to be received with equal piety and reverence, with the books of the Old and New Testament; and on this foundation the Church hath built her mighty fabric of rules and ceremonies, and instituted such a multitude of religious practices, which we hear nothing of in the holy scriptures. Thus Christ ordained two sacraments: these the Church of Rome hath multiplied to seven: and though Christ, when he presented the wine to his disciples, said, *Drink ye all of it*, the Church of Rome presumes to deny it to the laity,

SON.

I think the Church of Rome has done more injury to the Christian world, by taking the scriptures away, than by all her other impositions put together.

FATHER.

This is certainly the most arbitrary, cruel, and tyrannical of all her usurpations. The Word of God, and the Divine Spirit are the only instruments which work upon the hearts of mankind.

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and lead them in the way of salvation; and the Church of Rome hath taken one away, and denied the operation of the other. Every thing spiritual by this means is taken away; and bodily exercise substituted in its stead: the inestimable treasure of the Word of God is taken out of the hands of mankind; and instead thereof, they are to receive a strange heap of traditions, which have no tendency to enlighten the understanding, or mend the heart; but to fill the head with maxims and notions directly repugnant to the gospel of Christ, and make mankind bow down to the throne of idolatry and superstition.

S O N.

I hope I shall always look upon my Bible as an inestimable treasure, and never give it up on any pretence whatsoever.

F A T H E R.

I hope you will ever abide by this resolution and never let the Word of God depart from your mind: let it dwell richly in you in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; and remember, that the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The law of the Lord is pure, making wise the simple. I shall conclude our present conversation with the

words



words of the great Dr. Chillingworth, which contain a summary of the whole argument we have been upon. They are addressed to a writer in defence of Popery.

Know then, Sir, that when I say the religion of Protestants, is in prudence to be preferred before yours; as on the one side, I do not understand by your religion, the doctrine of Bellarmine or Baronius, or any other private man amongst you; nor the doctrine of the Sorbonne; or of the Jesuits; or of the Dominicans; or of any other particular company among you; but that wherein you all agree, or seem to agree, the doctrine of the Council of Trent: so accordingly on the other side, by the religion of Protestants, I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon; nor the confession of Augusta or Geneva; nor the Catechism of Heidelberg; nor the Articles of the Church of England: no, nor the harmony of Protestant confessions; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of their faith and actions, that is, the Bible. The Bible, I say the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants, whatsoever else they believe besides it. And the plain, irrefragable,

show

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"and indubitable consequences of it, well may  
 "they hold as matter of opinion; but as matter  
 "of faith and religion, neither can they with co-  
 "herence to their own grounds, believe it them-  
 "selves, or require the belief of it from others,"  
 "without most high and schismatical presump-  
 "tion. I, for my part, after a long and, as I  
 "verily believe and hope, impartial search of  
 "the true way to eternal happiness, do profess  
 "plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole  
 "of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see  
 "plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there  
 "are Popes against Popes, Councils against Coun-  
 "cils; some Fathers against others; in the same  
 "Fathers against themselves; a consent of Fathers  
 "of one age against a consent of Fathers of ano-  
 "ther age; the Church of one age against the  
 "Church of another age; traditive interpreta-  
 "tions of scripture are pretended: but there are  
 "few or none to be found. No tradition, but  
 "only of scripture can derive itself from the  
 "fountain, but may be plainly proved to be  
 "brought in, in such an age after Christ, or that  
 "such an age it was not in. In a word, there  
 "is no sufficient certainty, but of scripture only.  
 "for any considerate man to build upon; this,  
 "therefore, and this only, I have reason to be-  
 "lieve

"believe this I will profess; according to this  
 "I will live; and for this, if there be occasion,  
 "I will not only willingly, but even gladly, lose  
 "my life; though I should be sorry, that Chris-  
 "tians should take it from me. Propose me any  
 "thing out of this book, and require whether I  
 "believe or no, and seem it never so incompre-  
 "hensible to human reason, I will subscribe it  
 "with hand and heart, as knowing no demon-  
 "stration can be stronger than this. God hath  
 "said so, therefore it is true: in other things I  
 "will take no man's liberty of judging from him;  
 "neither shall any man take mine from me. I  
 "will think no man the worse man, nor the  
 "worse Christian: I will love no man the less, for  
 "differing in opinion from me. And what mea-  
 "sure I mete to others, I expect from them  
 "again. I am fully assured, that God does not,  
 "and therefore men ought not to, require any  
 "more of any man than this, to believe the  
 "scripture to be God's word; to endeavour to  
 "find the true sense of it, and live according to  
 "it."

The author of this work, with design to encou-  
 rage the reading of the Word of God, and to lead  
 young minds to an acquaintance with the Holy

Scriptures, hath attempted the **HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE IN VERSE.** He hath endeavoured to give a plain, concise, and regular account of the Sacred History: hath taken proper notice of Scripture chronology and ancient geography; and given descriptions of the rivers, mountains, cities, countries, and kingdoms, where those great events took place, which are recorded in the Sacred Volume. And he humbly hopes this attempt will be made useful in bringing youth into the way of instruction, and leading them in a delightful path to real knowledge and solid improvement. This History is completed in four small pocket volumes, which, with an elegant set of copper-plates, are sold at **Two Shillings each Volume, by Mr. ALEX. HOGG, No. 16, Paternoster-Row.**

**End of Dialogue VI.**



## DIALOGUE the SEVENTH.

*Of Justification, Auricular Confession, Priestly Absolution, Penance, and the Hypocrisy of the Church of Rome.*

FATHER.

IN our last conference, we considered the Roman Catholic rule of Faith; let us now proceed to examine her practice. But before we further advance, it ought to be remarked, that the faith which the Church of Rome pretends to, is not a lively, powerful, and efficacious principle wrought in the soul, by the Spirit of God, which works by love, purifies the heart, and determines the conduct, in obedience to the divine will. This is the faith of the Protestants; but the faith of the Papists is only a bare assent to the doctrines which are advanced by their councils; and an entire submission to the decrees of the Pope. These things they

they are obliged to assent to, on pain of damnation: and this is all the faith which is required of them.

S O N,

What do the Papists propose as the grounds of divine acceptance?

F A T H E R.

Take it in their own words. *Our good works, they say, do merit eternal life, not only by virtue of God's covenant and acceptance, but also by reason of the work itself.*

S O N,

And how do they expect the remission of their sins?

F A T H E R.

They do not esteem the sacrifice of Christ a sufficient atonement for sin, without the daily sacrifice of the mass; nor is the mass effectual, without confession, priestly absolution, and penance.

S O N,

I read in the New Testament, that *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*; and that the people

of

of God are by his holy spirit, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; but I read nothing of the sacrifice of the Mass, priestly absolution, nor penance. But if the dependence of the Church of Rome for justification is only on her good works, her votaries should be particularly careful in the performance of them.

FATHER.

They are in no doubt concerning that; but have so high an opinion of their good deeds, that some of them not only suppose they merit heaven for themselves, but have good works to spare, which precious treasure they leave to the Church.

SON.

I should apprehend the Church, and her members too, must be puzzled to determine the exact number of good works which will bring a person to heaven; and of consequence to ascertain how many he had to spare. This is an account of a very critical and mysterious nature; and it must be very hard to state it with exactness and precision: but when the Church hath amassed a sufficient stock of this kind of riches, how are they disposed of?

FATHER.

**FATHER.**  
 Out of this vast stock which the church has acquired, she can dispose of good works to those that want them; and you may be sure she will not want customers, since she supposes, that this kind of property may be transferred.

**SON.**  
 The Church of Rome is all of a piece I find, and her doctrine is as corrupt as her worship: but how does she dispose of these good works, of which she has so great a stock on hand?

**FATHER.**  
 By granting indulgences.

**SON.**  
 What are those indulgences?

**FATHER.**  
 These indulgences are, in the Papists account, "a discharge from the punishment of sins here, and in purgatory:" and they tell you, that the Popes and prelates of the church are judges appointed by God to remit faults and punishments in his name by an indulgence, if so be justice be satisfied by the application of the merits of Christ and



his saints. These indulgences are of various kinds; some for certain days; others for years; and some for ever. Some were discharges from the punishment of sin in this world; some from the pains of purgatory, and some from hell.

SON.

How were these indulgences to be obtained?

FATHER.

By money; by pilgrimages; by assisting the Popes in such a manner as their bulls required; and by reciting certain prayers. As the various doctrines and practices in the Church of Rome are particularly calculated to get money, it is to be supposed, that she hath made the best use of her indulgences to that end. Rivet tells us, in his *Castigation of the Jesuit*, that he met with a book at Paris, printed by public licence in the year 1500, called, *The Tax of the Apostolic Chamber*; in this book was specified the price which the Church of Rome demanded for the absolution of persons who committed different sorts of sins; the price of absolution being rated according to the different degrees of guilt and atrociousness of the several crimes. Here was a price set by the payment of which persons might be absolved, who had

had murdered fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives, or husbands; and the like for incest, and the most abominable crimes, which are too horrid to mention.

S O N.

The Church of Rome expects to be justified by works, and to stand before the throne of Supreme Justice clothed in her own righteousness; and yet pretends to have power to pardon those who have committed the most horrid and abominable crimes: is there not an inconsistency in this? I cannot conceive, how heaven can be merited by men of the most abandoned and profligate lives.

F A T H E R.

Those who join the communion of the Church of Rome, must not be disgusted either at inconsistencies or impossibilities; but, upon the whole, it ought to be remarked, that the Roman way of salvation is directly contrary to the gospel which was taught by Christ and his apostles. The great apostle Paul, whom the Romanists sometimes condescend to join with Peter, declared, *By grace are ye saved: not of works, lest any man should boast.* And we are taught by a greater than Paul,

*When we have done all those things which are commanded, to say, we are unprofitable servants. But if our good deeds are meritorious, we may approach the eternal throne with our demands; and when we are entered into heaven, we may say, God hath given us no more than our due.*

S O N.

*The Popish doctrine of merit seems to be the offspring of human pride; but I suppose it cannot be received by the humble Christian.*

F A T H E R.

*No one sentiment ever entered into the mind of man, which the sincere, humble Christian so much abhors, as the thought of building his hopes of the Divine acceptance on his own imperfect righteousness. There is so much vanity, folly, and sin, mixed with his best performances, that he dare not presume to mention these at the throne of eternal justice and purity; but heartily renounces them all as unprofitable and vain, and places his whole dependence on a better righteousness; and he desires for ever to rejoice, that Christ, by the appointment of God the Father, is made unto him *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.**

R

S O N.

And is not the method, which the Church of Rome proposes, to ease the consciences of sinners, as absurd, ridiculous, and impossible, as her doctrine of justification by works?

## FATHER.

Whoever is inspired by the Spirit of God with a real conviction of sin, and enabled to see the corruption and depravity of his nature, and feel the plague of his heart, is sensible, that nothing can ease his conscience but the application of the blood of Christ; and every such person looks with indignation and contempt on indulgences, absolution, and all the trumpery of Rome. And whoever is so unhappy as to depart this life without faith in Christ, and an application of that precious blood which *cleanseth from all sin*; however his conscience may be quieted with pardons, bulls, indulgences, absolutions, and masses left for the ease of his soul; though he may have received the extreme unction, and depart full freighted for heaven with all the soul-saving treasure which Rome can give; how firm soever his hope may be when he goes out of the world, he will certainly discover the cheat when it is too late; all his riches will vanish into smoke, and

leave



leave him poor indeed; when, to his eternal confusion, he will find, that *the hope of the hypocrite is as the giving up the ghost.*

S O N.

I find, that whoever depends on the authority of Rome, and believes in her power to pardon sins, may be very easy and quiet as to their eternal interest, if they have money to pay for their pardon; but how are the poor provided for?

F A T H E R.

By confession and priestly absolution. Every member of the Church of Rome is obliged to confess their sins to the priest once a year at least, and receive absolution; in failure of which he is liable to excommunication.

S O N.

What sins do they confess to the priest?

F A T H E R.

They are required to confess all their sins; but commanded to make a particular discovery of all mortal sins to the priest, with all the circumstances that increase or diminish their size, as far as can be called to mind; without which, they are

*told, neither forgiveness or salvation as to be obtained.*

**S O N.**

Is any such confession commanded in the Word of God?

**F A T H E R.**

There is neither command nor example in the New Testament of such confession: there is some mention made of confession of sin, but it is not enjoined by authority, and rather seems to be a voluntary confession, on particular occasions which required advice.

**S O N.**

And with what views is it to be supposed, the Church of Rome established the doctrine of auricular confession?

**F A T H E R.**

She had several important ends to answer by it. In the first place, it tends to exalt the priesthood; for the confessor puts himself in the place of God, to whom we ought to confess our sins, and he only hath power and right to forgive them; both which are insolently assumed by the Popish priests.

priests. Further, this confession is a kind of political key, which opens to their view the secrets of kings and kingdoms; and they learn by what means to support their authority and dominion: they sift out every man's inclination and interest; and having thus opened the breast of princes, they become masters of those secrets which enable them to carry on their intrigues with success: and also, by confession, they become acquainted with the inclinations of women, and can mark those ladies who may be most likely to yield to their amorous desires. The world is very censorious, if the Popish priests, friars, jesuits, monks, bishops, cardinals, and popes, have not made great use of this kind of knowledge.

S O N.

That is not unlikely: but what is the form of their confession?

F A T H E R.

They follow the form of the ten commandments according to their order; and the father confessor enquires very minutely and particularly into each part of the confession, the penitent being obliged, on pain of damnation, to confess the whole truth.

R 3

S O N.

S O N.

But I should think, persons would be prevented from confessing gross and scandalous vices, by shame and fear of being exposed.

F A T H E R.

The confessor prevents the shame which such sins might fill the penitent with, by the kind, condescending, soothing manner in which he receives the confession; and they take care to manage so craftily, that persons are under no fear of being exposed: for the priest is enjoined to keep the most profound secrecy, and is liable to be punished, if he discovers, to the prejudice of any person's reputation, what he has heard in confession.

S O N.

But I think, I should not like to have my sins known to any person on earth, especially if I had been guilty of enormous and capital crimes.

F A T H E R.

The secrecy of the Romish confessors is carried to still greater lengths, and extends not only to sins already committed, but to those which are designed. We are told, *That it is not lawful for a priest*



a priest, in any case, come what will, to reveal confession, whether the party be penitent or not; whether he confess sins already committed, or which he hath a mind and resolution to commit. And in the writings of a Jesuit we are told, That in no case, and for no end, yea, though it were to protect the state from never so great a mischief, be it temporal or spiritual, the said seal may be violated.

S O N.

Are all ranks and degrees of persons in the Romish communion obliged to confess?

F A T H E R.

None are excused: for even his Holiness, the Pope kneels down, and unburdens his conscience to his confessor, and receives absolution.

S O N.

And what is their absolution supposed to do for them?

F A T H E R.

They suppose, that by absolution they receive a full discharge from the guilt of all their sins, and are perfectly pure and holy, if they have confessed without

without reserve; but if they have not confessed the whole, there is neither forgiveness nor salvation to be obtained: but if a person's sins are faithfully confessed, they say, *The absolution is not only declarative, but judicial; and the sentence pronounced by the priest is as if pronounced by the Judge himself, he perfecting the work of God.*

SON.

So then I perceive, if the doctrine of the Church of Rome be true, there is no danger of souls missing their way to heaven, if they can obtain the absolution of a priest; but did Christ give such a power to his apostles?

FATHER.

The apostles were furnished with various miraculous powers, to enable them to propagate the gospel; particularly that of healing diseases. And our Lord, in the course of his ministry, when he healed the sick, used to say to the diseased person, *Thy sins are forgiven thee:* which form of words denoted, that he was cured of his disease. Accordingly, when Christ bestowed the gift of healing on his apostles, he said, *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

These

FATHER.

These words, the Church of Rome, being determined to exalt the priesthood to the most extravagant height, resolves to understand in their plain, literal sense; and supposes, that this power over the souls of men, descended from St. Peter to the Pope, and from him to the Romish clergy; so that you see, that these men have impiously assumed the authority of God.

S O N.

And do they receive confessions from, and give absolution to, persons, when they are at the point of death?

F A T H E R.

It is not to be supposed, that those who believe in priestly absolution will neglect so great an opportunity of being eased of the burden of their sins: but how deplorable will their condition be, when they open their eyes in another world, and perceive themselves cheated in an affair of such importance.

S O N.

But is not repentance necessary, in order to forgiveness?

F A T H E R.

## FATHER.

True gospel repentance supposes such a lively and powerful conviction of sins, and such a keen and heart-affecting sorrow for it, as not only produce an hatred to it, but a manifest change of heart and life. But this is not the Romish system of repentance: a very low degree of contrition is sufficient with them. The Trent Catechism informs us of their sentiments on this head.

"Granting," they say, "that sins are blotted  
 "out by *contrition*, who knows not, that it ought  
 "to be so vehement, pungent, and intense, that  
 "the bitterness of the grief may equal the great-  
 "ness of the sins; but because very few would  
 "reach this degree, therefore the number of those  
 "that could hope for pardon this way, would  
 "be exceeding small: wherefore it was necessary  
 "that our most merciful Lord should provide for  
 "the common salvation by an easier method;  
 "which he hath done with admirable wisdom, in  
 "delivering to the Church, the keys of the king-  
 "dom of heaven. For, according to the doctrine  
 "of the Catholic Faith, all are to believe, and  
 "constantly to affirm, *That whoever is so disposed,*  
 "*as to be sorry for the sins he hath done, and also*  
 "*to purpose to sin no more, although he is not as*  
 "*yet* *perfect*



“felled with that grief which may be sufficient  
“to obtain his pardon, yet, when he has duly con-  
“fessed his sins to a priest, all his sins are par-  
“doned and forgiven him.”

So that you see, by the power of the keys, they  
can let you into heaven upon very easy terms.

S O N.

If this is true, a person may live a wicked life,  
and escape the terrors of death. If old Baalam  
had been a Roman Catholic, he need not with so  
much earnestness have said, *Let me die the death  
of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*  
It would have been enough to have said, O, that  
when I lie on the bed of death, I may be so happy  
as to find a priest to absolve me! But if it is so  
easy a matter to get to heaven in the Romish  
account, by what means do the clergy make it  
pay?

F A T H E R.

They have two kinds of punishments in reserve,  
out of which they, by their artful management,  
extort such sums as pay them very well for their  
trouble.

S O N.

What punishments can they be? I should sup-  
pose, that when a person had received a full par-  
don

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don for all his sins from the mouth of one whom he supposes, in this case, equal to God himself, there could no punishment remain behind.

**FATHER.**  
In this you would find yourself mistaken. The priests take care to let their votaries know, that they have not done with them, when their sins are absolved; for, they tell them, that they are liable to temporal punishment, and the fire of purgatory; one before death, and the other after.

**SON.**  
And by what means are these to be escaped?

**FATHER.**  
The Romans tell you, by making satisfaction.

**SON.**  
What is satisfaction?

**FATHER.**  
They tell you, it is a compensation made to God, by prayers, fasting, alms, &c. for all offences committed against him; so that the offender is thereupon purged from the defilement of sin, and discharged from all temporal punishments due to him.

either here or in purgatory; and these works are meritorious and satisfactory, being united to the satisfaction of Christ. Thus you see, that by this horrid, impious, and most abominable doctrine of merit, the Romish Church not only sets her votaries on a level with Christ, by joining their works with his, but makes way for her masses and indulgences, and thus encourages her own pick-pocket trade.

S O N.

It is easy to see, by what means vast sums may be extorted from the sick, who have confessed great sins. The more atrocious their crimes, I suppose the greater satisfaction will be required: but how do the gentlemen priests manage those who confess in the common course, in time of health?

F A T H E R.

The learned confess in a different method from the vulgar: they are examined by the confessor concerning sins of thought, word, and deed; but the unlearned and ignorant confess in the order of the ten commandments; and sometimes the confessor, by his too nice examination, informs them of sins which they never thought of before.

S

S O N.

**S O N.**  
And how are these expected to make satisfaction?

**F A T H E R.**  
By doing penance.

**S O N.**  
What is penance?

**F A T H E R.**

After the penitents have confessed their sins, and declared, that they have concealed nothing; and having promised to amend their lives, to frequent the sacrament, and obey the orders of the church, the priest informs them what their penance must be, which is an arbitrary determination of the priest; and more or less is imposed according to the circumstances of the person, or the nature of the crimes confessed. They are informed, "That they ought to consider, that though you shall be freed by my absolution, from the eternal pains your manifold sins deserve, you shall not be free from the suffering of Purgatory, where your soul must be purified by fire, if you in this present life do not

" take



" take care to redeem your soul from that  
" terrible flame, by ordering some masses for  
" the relief of the souls in Purgatory." The  
penitent having promised to do this, as far as  
lies in his power, the confessor proceeds:  
" Now to shew your obedience to God, and  
" our mother, the Church, you must perform  
" the following penance. You must fast every  
" second day, to mortify your lusts and passions;  
" and this for the space of two months: you  
" must visit five altars every second day, and one  
" privileged altar, and say in each of them five  
" times Pater-Noster, and five times Ave-Maria:  
" you must say too, every day, for two months  
" time, three and thirty times the Creed, in ho-  
" nor and memory of the three and thirty years,  
" that our Saviour did live upon earth; and you  
" must confess once a week; that by the continu-  
" ance of these SPIRITUAL EXERCISES your  
" soul may be preserved from several temptations,  
" and may be happy for ever."

Thus you see, that the priests in the Church  
of Rome, have the laity absolutely in their power,  
and can enjoin them what penances they please;  
for they give them to understand, that the absolu-  
tion is void, if the penance is not punctually per-  
formed: and hence you may observe, how dan-  
gerous,  
S 2  
" take

gerous a thing it is, to incur the displeasure of the Church, when it is in her power to make them feel the severity of her correction.

**S O N.**

Do they presume to inflict personal penance and severities on great persons?

**F A T H E R.**

Henry the second was obliged to walk barefoot to the tomb of Becket, and permit himself to be severely scourged by the monks; and several kings have been constrained to submit to equal severities: sometimes they have been commanded to make war against the enemies of the Pope; at other times to go long pilgrimages: a nobleman of Venice was enjoined, by way of penance, to lie like a dog, with a collar of iron about his neck, under the Pope's table: and various sorts of penances have been commanded, such as the superiors of the Romish Church thought fit to impose.

**S O N.**

I can see but little religion in these *spiritual exercises* as they call them. The visiting altars repeatedly, and saying prayers and creeds over and

and over, seems to have nothing in it that is rational and manly, nor any thing spiritual and divine: it is *bodily exercise* all; and that the apostle informs us, *profiteth nothing*: and I remember, our Lord commands his disciples, *not to use vain repetitions* in their prayers. This practice, the great Redeemer thought fit to forbid, because it was conformable to the customs of the Heathens, but it seems the heathen form of worship is not at all disagreeable to the Church of Rome.

FATHER.

The worship of the Church of Rome, according to their own account of it, may be very well carried on, when the worshipper does not understand one word of it. A writer of their own tells us, that "he is commanded to assist at the Church service, and to hear mass: and in this he is instructed, not so much to understand the words, as to know what is done; for the mass being a sacrifice, wherein is daily commemorated the death and passion of Christ, by an oblation, made by the priest, of the body and blood of the Immaculate Lamb, under the symbols of bread and wine, according to his own institution: it is not so much the business of the congregation present, to employ their ears in

“ attending to the words, as their hearts in con-  
 “ templation of the Divine mysteries, by raising  
 “ up fervent affections of love, thanksgiving, sor-  
 “ row for sins, resolutions of amendment, &c.  
 “ That thus, having their hearts and intentions  
 “ united with the priests; they may be partakers  
 “ of his prayers, and the sacrifice he is then  
 “ offering; than which he believes nothing is  
 “ more acceptable to God, or beneficial to true  
 “ believers: and for the raising of these affections  
 “ in his soul, and filling his heart with love and  
 “ devotion; he thinks, in this case, there is  
 “ little need of words.

Is not this strange kind of divinity? How can  
 the heart be affected with what it does not under-  
 stand! The worshipper in such a situation may  
 have a high reverence for the priest; may be in-  
 spired with awe at the solemnity of the place; may  
 bow to the crucifix; may kneel down at the ex-  
 altation of the host; and most devoutly remark  
 all the bowings, crossings, kissings, kneeling, and  
 every other ceremony of the mass; but it is hard  
 to suppose, how his understanding may be in-  
 formed, or his heart filled with real devotion,  
 while he does not know the language in which  
 this worship is performed.

SON.

FATHER.



S O N.

The worship of the Church of Rome seems to be all outside; they seem to think that there is a wonderful holiness and sanctity in external things; and, if their religion was true, I should think it would lead them a very easy way to heaven, if it was not for the overbearing authority and dominion of their priests.

F A T H E R.

It is an avowed principle with them, that sacraments and prayers have their efficacy by the bare saying them. "The very naming the words, saying the prayers, and receiving the sacraments, according to the laws and rules of the Church, is sufficient without troubling ourselves about knowledge, love, attention, devotion, or any thing which concerns the manner of doing. Salmeron says, *The words of prayer in the mouth of him that prays, are like the words of a charmer: they prevail when they are not understood.*"

S O N.

This is strange sort of devotion indeed.

FATHER.

FATHER.

And they further tell you, that "The devotion of the Church will serve instead of particular persons. The Church furnishes you with words, which you must repeat or hear repeated; and though you should use these words without any attention or affection, there is no great harm in that: *the Church has devotion, though you have none.*"

SON.

It is very well they do not require attention, when their service is performed in an unknown tongue: but is not this hypocrisy? Is it not honoring God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him?

FATHER.

The worship of the Church of Rome, if it could be understood, is such a jumble of absurdity and tautology, so childish and ridiculous, so full of vain repetitions, so interlarded with prayers to saints and angels, petitions to the dead, and such like abominable stuff; there is so little of God, religion, or reason, either in the matter or form of it, that it is impossible there should be much of the heart in it. Upon the whole, it is a scene  
of

of the most deplorable delusion; and well might the apostle, when describing the coming of anti-christ, and the deceitful wiles which he would use, to establish his unrighteous dominion, say, *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.* Their doctrine of merit is an impious insult on the merit of Christ. Their works of supererogation are the offspring of abominable pride and self-sufficiency; the transferring of merit is to the last degree absurd and ridiculous; and their priestly absolution is a cheat of so extensive a nature, that it is not confined within the limits of the world.

End of Dialogue VII.

The worship of the Church of Rome, if it could be understood, is such a jumble of splendor and tautology, to childish and ridiculous to all of vain repetitions, to interlarded with prayers to saints and angels, petitions to the dead, and such like abominable stuff; there is to him of God, religion, or reason, either in the manner or form of it, that it is impossible there should be much of the heart in it. Upon the whole, it is a scene of

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of the Church of Rome.  
DIALOGUE the EIGHTH.

*Of Purgatory, and the seven pretended Sacraments in the Church of Rome.*

FATHER.  
Most certainly it is: for in Pope Pius's creed, which is extracted from the council of Trent, it is delivered as an article of the Christian faith, and every Catholic convert is required to confess.

SON.

I HAVE observed, Sir, in the course of our conversation on the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome, you have frequently mentioned Purgatory: what kind of a place is that? and where is it supposed to be?

And on what account do you suppose this doctrine was first introduced into the Roman Church?

FATHER.

Indeed, Son, you have asked me two very hard questions: for after the most diligent enquiry, I cannot find any satisfactory account in what Region, soil, or clime, Purgatory lies. I believe, it is only to be found on poetical ground, and belongs entirely to the imagination: nor can I give you a better account of the place itself; for the most ingenious and learned men have contrived a method to solve this question, but their opinions are so different, that they are almost as contradictory as the questions themselves.



opinions about it are so various and uncertain, that no conclusion can be formed.

SON.

But is it not an approved doctrine of the Church of Rome, that there is such a place?

FATHER.

Most certainly it is: for in Pope Pius's creed, which is extracted from the council of Trent, it is delivered as an article of the Christian faith; and every Catholic convert is required to confess, *I do constantly hold, that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained, are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.*

SON.

And on what account do you suppose this doctrine was first introduced into the Roman Church?

FATHER.

The Church of Rome having laid it down as a certain principle, that persons are absolutely cleared from the guilt of all their sins, by the absolution of the priest; and not being willing, even at the hour of death, to give up her interest in her votaries, hath contrived a method to follow

low them into the world of spirits, and make an advantage of them after their death. Hence she declares, that those who depart out of this world in a state of forgiveness, that is, those who have received the absolution of the priest, the Pope's indulgence, and all the armour of Rome, to resist the devil, and equip them for heaven, may yet have some lesser sins for which they have not made satisfaction; and for these they are seized by Divine Justice, and taken to a certain place, in which, as in a prison, after this life, those souls are purged, which in this life were not fully cleansed; so that being fully purified, they may be able to enter into heaven, into which no unclean thing can come. And purgatory is further defined, by the Church of Rome, to be a middle state of souls which depart this life in God's grace, yet not without some lesser stains of guilt or punishment, which retard them from entering heaven.

S O N.

I suppose, this purgatory is a device of Rome, to hold persons fast, till they have made satisfaction to the church; that is, till their surviving relations have paid for the masses, or whatever the priest required, before he gave them absolution.

FATHER.

low them into the world of spirits, and make an

FATHER.

This seems to be the case: and if it was not for purgatory, the priestly trade would not be so brisk as it is. The fire of purgatory is very necessary in the Pope's kitchen; and it hath been the means of warming and feeding thousands of lazy priests.

SON.

In what period was this doctrine introduced into the church?

FATHER.

As this doctrine was originally received from the Pagans, there were some confused traces of it among the Christians, from the time of Silvester, about the year 310, to the time of Gregory the Great, about 600: but it cannot be proved, that it was preached up with any pretence of certainty, till the time of Gregory: and after that, the doctrine of purgatory was eight hundred years before it received the sanction of the assemblies, which they ridiculously call *General and most sacred councils*; it being, for the first time, established as an article of faith by the council of Florence, held in the year 1439.

FATHER.

T

SON.

S O N.

Then the doctrine of purgatory came from the Pagans?

F A T H E R.

They did not explain it in the same manner as the Church of Rome does; but they believed something like it: for it was a sentiment known amongst them, that the dead might receive benefit from something done for them by the living. This was a notion very common amongst the heathen poets and philosophers: Homer, in his 11th *Odyssy*, gives a long relation of the descent of *Ulysses* into the regions of the dead, and informs us of the punishments of departed souls, and the sacrifices to be offered to relieve them. *Virgil*, in his 6th *Æneid*, gives an account something like that of *Homer*. Nor was this fanciful doctrine only to be found amongst the poets: *Plato* and *Cicero* have recorded it in their works. And we may learn from the Holy Scriptures, that this notion was in repute amongst the idolatrous Heathens; for the prophet, recording the idolatries of the *Israelites*, says, *They joined themselves to Baal-Peor, and eat the sacrifices of the dead.*

FATHER.

T

S O N.



S O N.

So then it appears, that this brat was hatched amongst the heathen poets and philosophers, and adopted and nursed by the Church of Rome.

F A T H E R.

The Church of Rome having adopted this fantastical tenet, and interwoven it into the system of her religion, it was soon found by the clergy to turn out much to their advantage: and the greatest men of their church have endeavoured to give such an account of it, as might make it go down with the vulgar. But there have been so many different opinions about it, that it is very hard to give a regular account of what they believe concerning it; but you may be sure, as the persons confined there, are to be relieved by masses, prayers, and indulgences, and all these are to be paid for, they would represent the fire of purgatory dreadfully intense and intolerable.

S O N.

But have none of their writers told us where and what sort of a place it is?

T 2

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

FATHER.

Cardinal Bellarmine, after having mentioned a great number of uncertain conjectures about this imaginary prison, proceeds to inform us, that most good Catholics believe it to be in the bowels of the earth: there, they suppose, is a vast deep and dreadful cave or dungeon, which is divided into four apartments; the lowest and deepest of these is hell; the second, purgatory; the third, the place of departed infants; and the fourth, the prison where the souls of the patriarchs were confined, who were all released by Christ, when he descended into hell. Such is the division which the fancies of the Roman doctors have made in this dreadful cavern: but the priests, to make the best hand of the prison of purgatory, have divided it into eight apartments, containing eight degrees of intenseness in its fire; the hottest apartment is for kings and princes; the most moderate, for common people; and the other six divisions, for the different degrees of persons betwixt them.

SON.

I suppose, the hottest places are assigned to kings and princes, because they are best able to pay for masses to be said for their relief.

FATHER.

## FATHER.

You are right in your conjecture; and the methods the priests make use of to increase the trade, and drain the purses of the laity, on pretence of praying the souls of their friends and relations out of this dreadful prison, are so many and various, that you will be surprised to hear. Almost every penance contains masses to be paid for, for the relief of the souls in purgatory; sermons are made, wherein the condition of these poor souls is represented in the most terrible and affecting light. It is reported, that the preachers burn brimstone in the pulpit while they are preaching, to shew what sort of fire there is in purgatory; and there are paintings in the churches, where this dreadful fire, and the persons tormented in it, are represented in the most strong and striking colours; and every consideration is urged, to induce their friends and relations to contribute generously to their relief: sometimes stories of apparitions and spectres are raised, to excite pious people to consider the state of the dead; and beggars are sent howling about the streets, to implore this sort of alms, which is represented as the greatest of charities.

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N. O. S.

S O N.

Do they suppose all persons, without exception, go to purgatory when they die?

F A T H E R.

As purgatory would never have been found out, but for the advantage of being paid for the prayers which are to relieve these poor prisoners; it is manifestly for the interest of the church, to send as many there as possible; and as they suppose, that none have the privilege of being admitted into this fiery prison, but such who are in a state of salvation, it is not to be supposed, that the church will lose her customers, by sending her members to heaven without calling at purgatory; and, therefore, it is a general opinion, that very few escape that state of purification. As to those, who, for want of absolution, go directly to hell, there is nothing to be done for them.

S O N.

And how long is it supposed, that the souls of the dead lie in purgatory?

F A T H E R.

As they produce the words of Christ in proof of purgatory, where he says, *The debtor shall be*

cast



cast into prison, and not be released till he has paid the uttermost farthing: and as it is well known, that going to jail pays no debts, they must suppose, that the poor souls will lie in purgatory till they are relieved by the charity of well-disposed persons, except their relations will be so generous as to order masses sufficient for their immediate relief: and it is manifest, that the Church of Rome supposes souls to be a long time in purgatory, because prayers are put up, and masses said, for some who have been dead upwards of two hundred years.

#### S O N.

But how is it known, when the prayers and masses have been successful, and the souls for whom those prayers and masses are said, are actually released?

#### F A T H E R.

If you will not believe the priest, and are very critical and sceptical in this matter, it will be very difficult to give you satisfaction. To convince those who are not too incredulous, Mr. Gavin tells us, " They have a device; which is, " putting a little mouse under a glass, close by " the tabernacle where the consecrated host is " kept,

kept, and telling the friends of the person departed, for whose soul the mass is said, that if his soul is yet detained in prison, they would see a little mouse; so when they think the friends of the deceased begin to be tired, and will pay no more, they take the mouse away, and then they may be assured, that the soul is released."

## S O N.

I am afraid I should be hard of belief in such cases. But what degree of intenseness do the priests ascribe to the fire of purgatory?

## F A T H E R.

As it is necessary, in order to keep up the trade, to affect the imagination of the living; and fill them with an awful concern, for the deplorable state of the dead; you may be sure they take care to describe this fire in the most terrible and heart-affecting manner. They tell us, That once upon a time, a good fellow, who had lain there thirty years, having a fair chance given him, whether he would lie there one day longer, or return to the earth, and be bound, for an hundred years together, to walk upon sharp iron nails which would pierce his

his feet; and to eat nothing but bread baked on the embers; and to drink nothing but vinegar mingled with gall; and to wear nothing but that which was made of camel's hair; and to lie always upon God's cold earth, with a stone under his head, instead of a pillow, made choice to abide all this, rather than continue one day more in purgatory.

S O N.

Purgatory is a dreadful place indeed.

F A T H E R.

It is for the interest of the Romish clergy to have it thought so; and accordingly, they take every occasion in their sermons to paint it in the strongest colors; so as to affect the hearts of the living with compassion for the dead, and open their purses for their relief. An instance of this Mr. Gavin gives us from his own certain knowledge: his words are,

I went once to hear an old friar, who had the name of an excellent preacher, upon the subject of the souls in purgatory; and he took his text out of the twenty-first chapter of the Apoc. the twenty-seventh verse. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh

worketh abomination: by which he settled the belief of a purgatory; proving, by some romantic authority, that such a passage ought to be understood of purgatory; and his chief authority was, because a famous interpreter or expositor renders the text thus, There shall not enter into it (meaning heaven) any thing which is not proved by the fire, as silver is purified by it. When he had proved his text, he came to divide it, which he did in these three heads: First, That the souls suffer in purgatory three sorts of torments; the first of which was fire, and that greater than the fire of hell. Secondly, To be deprived of the face of God. And, Thirdly, which was the greatest of all the torments, To see their relations and friends here on earth, diverting themselves, and taking so little care to relieve them out of those terrible pains. The preacher spoke very little of the two first points; but he insisted upon the third a long hour, taxing the people with ingratitude and inhumanity; and, that if it was possible for any of the living to experience only for a moment, that devouring flame of purgatory, certainly they would come again, and sell whatever they had in the world, and give it for masses. And what pity it is, said he, to know that there are the souls of many of my hearers relations there, and none of them endeavour to relieve them



out of that place. He went on, and said, I have a catalogue of the souls, which, by revelations and apparitions, we are sure are in purgatory: for, in the first place, the soul of such an one (naming the soul of a rich merchant's father) did appear the other night to a godly person, in the figure of a pig; and the devout person, knowing that the door of his chamber was locked, began to sprinkle the pig with holy water, and conjuring him, bade him speak, and tell what he wanted; and the pig said, I am the soul of such an one; and I have been in purgatory these ten years for want of help. When I left the world, I forgot to tell my confessor, where I left one thousand pistoles, which I had reserved for masses: my son found them out, and he is such an unnatural child, that he doth not remember my pitiful condition; and now, by the permission of heaven, I come to you, and command you to discover this case to the first preacher you meet, that he may publish it: and tell my son, that if he doth not give that money for masses for my relief, I shall be for ever in purgatory, and his soul shall certainly go to hell.

Mr. Gavin informs us, that the merchant being in the church, was so affected with this story, that he got up before all the people, and, taking the friar with him to his house, paid the money.

SON.

I should think, if it was so great a branch of christian charity, to remember the poor souls in purgatory, and to say prayers and masses for their relief, the clergy might be so charitable as to pray them out of that dreadful place, without any reward.

**FATHER:**

If that was the case, the fire of purgatory would soon grow mild: but to let you see, that the Romish clergy do not want charity, they have two prayers in every public mass for the poor souls in purgatory; and, on the 2d of November, every priest and friar says three masses for the relief of these poor souls: and it is reported amongst the Catholics, that his Holiness is so kind to these miserable spirits, as to allow them twenty-four hours holyday. The prison of purgatory is then supposed to be empty, and the prisoners are diverting themselves in the air, and expecting relief from the masses which are saying in all the churches for the whole time: for during these twenty-four hours, Mr. Gavin tells us, "The churches are crowded with people, and the priests are singing prayers for the dead: besides, the bells ring in all the churches during

**FATHER:**

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"the time, which, they say, is a wonderful relief to these poor souls,"

S O N.

I thought to have asked, who is the keeper of purgatory? For, as it is supposed to lie on the confines of hell, I imagined it might perhaps be under the dominion of the Prince of Darkness; but I understand, that office is claimed by his Holiness, the Pope.

F A T H E R.

And it is recorded in history, that, on some great occasion, the Pontiff, out of the church-treasure, which he has in his possession (which you are to understand, consists in masses already said, and works of supererogation) pays off all the debts of the souls in purgatory, and sets the whole number at liberty in one day: but as souls are constantly departing thither from the earth, the prison soon fills again; and the priests get fresh customers for their prayers.

S O N.

And when a soul departs from this world, and is to be sent to purgatory, by what kind of Bailiff is it arrested, and taken to prison?

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F A T H E R.

FATHER.

I doubt, Son, you are too inquisitive to make a good Catholic; for that is an article of which it is out of my power to give you information: you may as well ask me, when the Pope lets all the souls out of purgatory, to have twenty-four hours refreshment, how he does to get them in again?

SON.

I suppose, he does it BY THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

FATHER.

It is time to begin to talk seriously about this ridiculous doctrine of purgatory, and compare it with the Protestant doctrine. We believe, that Christ made a full satisfaction for the sins of all who believe in him: and how absurd and ridiculous is it to suppose, that he has made satisfaction so far as to bring his people safe to heaven; he has done away the guilt of all deadly sins; but there remain some small ones, for which no satisfaction is made to Divine Justice; but such satisfaction is exacted of the sinner in a middle state between heaven and hell, and he is detained in torment till the remaining debt is paid to  
Eternal



Eternal Justice by sinners on earth? One would think, that this doctrine carries so much absurdity and impossibility on the face of it, it could not be believed. I would only ask, what satisfaction can any man make to Divine Justice for his own sins, much less for the sins of another?

S O N.

But you are to observe, that souls go to purgatory for little sins; the deadly ones are done away by Christ.

F A T H E R.

How absurd and foolish is it to suppose, that Christ hath done away the greater, and left the lesser? But it is to be remarked, that the distinction between mortal and venial sins, is not a scriptural distinction, but a wicked imposition of Rome, designed to answer her own ends, and carry on her trade. The least sin is a violation of the holy, eternal, and immutable law of God; and the language of inspiration is, that *he that transgresseth in one point, is guilty of all*. When God, by his Holy Spirit, charges the guilt of sin on the sinner's conscience, he finds no small sins. The doctrine of Rome is, that some sins are so small, that God cannot punish them in hell:

hell: but wo to that sinner, who goes out of this world with the guilt of the least sin upon him, and must suffer till his friends make satisfaction for him to the justice of God.

## S O N.

And is not the supposition, that Christ hath made satisfaction for great sins, but not for small ones, an impious insult on his infinite merit?

## F A T H E R.

Most certainly it is: and how contrary to the language of scripture? We are not told of partial pardons there: *I have blotted out, as a cloud, thine iniquities*, says the Lord, *and, as a thick cloud, thy sins*. This beautiful figure supposes the debt not only discharged, and the book crossed, but the account quite obliterated, and the leaf so blotted, that it, like a black cloud, is all of a-piece, and no traces of the writing remain. Where then are the little sins? *I have cast thy sins into the depth of the sea*, says the Lord, *they shall be remembered no more*. *The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found*. And conformable to this is the language of the New Testament: *There is now no condemnation*

to those that are in Christ, says the apostle Paul: and in another place, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?*

S O N.

But I think you mentioned the fire of Purgatory, as supposed by the Papists, to purge and purify?

F A T H E R.

It is so: but those that belong to Christ need no such purification; it is sufficient for them that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin: and on him only they depend to forgive their sins, and cleanse them from all unrighteousness. But that we may be entirely satisfied concerning the state of the dead, who belong to the Lord, and are made partakers of his forgiving love, I shall refer you to a text where that point is absolutely decided, so as to stand in need of no further enquiry; Rev. xiv. 13. *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

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S O N.

S O N.

I think we may depart from this imaginary prison, and turn our enquiries to another subject. I have heard that the Church of Rome maintains, that there are seven sacraments: what are they?

F A T H E R.

The Church of Rome, whose practice it is to corrupt the gospel of Christ with her inventions, hath displayed her inventive abilities in the sacraments. Jesus Christ instituted two; and she hath multiplied them to seven: which are, 1. Baptism; 2. Confirmation; 3. Penance; 4. The Lord's Supper; 5. Extreme Unction; 6. Holy Orders; and 7. Matrimony. Of the greatest part of these, as they are manifestly of human invention, little need be said: but as it is the practice of Rome to corrupt the institutions of Christ; and we have largely considered the Lord's supper, and seen how deplorably they have corrupted it from the primitive mode of its institution; let us now turn our thoughts to baptism, and see whether that hath fared any better.

S O N.

What was the original mode of the institution of that ordinance?

F A T H E R.



FATHER.

When John the fore-runner of the great Redeemer began his public ministry, he tells us, he was commanded by God to baptize. This ordinance he administered by immersion in water; in rivers and streams of common water: and our Lord's commission to his apostles is thus to be understood, when he commands them, *to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*: and in conformity to this rule, it was the practice of the apostles, to baptize believers by immersion; and this was the primitive way of administering that ordinance.

SON.

And how is baptism administered by the Romish priests?

FATHER.

There is so much difference between Christ's baptism, and the baptism of the Pope, that no person would think them to be the same: the first is plain and simple; the last disfigured with such a redundancy of ridiculous, superstitious ceremonies, that one would think these innovators had lost all view of the original ordinance. Of these

I shall give you an account from their own approved authors; and mark the signification which they assign to every ceremony.

“ They consecrate the water, not only with  
 “ prayers and invocations, but with a three-fold  
 “ pouring in of holy oil. They cross the party  
 “ to be baptized, whether of years or an infant,  
 “ on the eyes, that he may be prepared to see the  
 “ love of God; on the ears, that he may hear the  
 “ truth; on the nose, that he may smell the sweet  
 “ savor of the gospel; on the breast, *for with*  
 “ *the heart man believeth unto righteousness*; on  
 “ the neck, that he may undergo the yoke of  
 “ God; and on the mouth, because with the  
 “ mouth we confess unto salvation. He is exor-  
 “ cised or conjured with a certain charm (or  
 “ breathing on him) that the devil may be driven  
 “ out of him. They put consecrated salt into his  
 “ mouth, that being seasoned with that typical  
 “ salt, he may be freed from the corruption of  
 “ ~~iniquity~~, and not be ~~del~~ly-blown with sin, but  
 “ the better prepared for the relish of wisdom.  
 “ Then they put spittle into his nose and ears;  
 “ some authors say, mouth and ears, because,  
 “ saith Rabanus, Jesus, when he cured the deaf  
 “ and dumb, touched his tongue with spittle, and  
 “ put his fingers into his ears, saying, *Ephphatha*,  
 “ be

" he opened ! for by this typical spittle and touch  
 " of the priest, the Divine virtue operates to  
 " open the party's nostrils, to receive the sweet  
 " favor of knowledge; and opens his ears, to hear  
 " the commands of God. They add imposition  
 " of hands, and the sacerdotal blessing; they  
 " anoint him with holy oil on the breast, to the  
 " end, saith Rabanus, that *no relics of the abscond-*  
 " *ing enemy* (he means the devil) may remain  
 " in him; as also on the shoulders, that he may  
 " be strong, to bear the burthen of God, and to  
 " do good works: and, that he may be super-  
 " sufficiently anointed, they further anoint him  
 " on the top of the crown, that he may remem-  
 " ber, he is now ingrafted into Christ, the head  
 " of the church. Then there was anciently a  
 " kiss of peace given him; but that is now left  
 " off: as likewise, putting a lighted wax taper  
 " in his hand, the making him taste milk and  
 " honey, and wear a white garment.

Such is the number of ridiculous ceremonies,  
 with which they have corrupted this sacred or-  
 dinance, which, at its primitive institution, was  
 no more than immersion in water, in the ado-  
 rable name of each person in the Trinity.

S O N.

I perceive the Church of Rome is all of a-piece; she has raked in the mud of superstition so long, and her hands are grown so dirty, that every thing she touches is defiled: but as to the rest of her sacraments, how does she manage in the administration of them?

F A T H E R.

We have seen how abominably she hath corrupted Christ's two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's supper. As to the other five pretended sacraments, as they are manifestly of her own invention, I shall leave her to administer them her own way: at present I shall only take notice of a glaring absurdity in her conduct, which, I think, cannot be reconciled: she makes matrimony to be one of her sacraments, and these sacraments she supposes necessary to salvation; and yet this same matrimony she esteems so unholy and impure, that she has prohibited it to her clergy.

S O N.

This seems a glaring inconsistency indeed: but on what pretence is the marriage of priests forbidden?

F A T H E R.

S O N.



FATHER.

We will enter on that subject at another opportunity, in which I shall give you an account of the celibacy of the Romish clergy, with the apparent consequences of it.

SON.

Before we conclude this conference, I should be glad to know what the extreme unction is.

FATHER.

This ceremony is called the extreme unction, because it is administered to persons at the point of death: it consists in anointing several parts of the body with the oil of olives, which has been consecrated by a bishop: according to the account of the Romans themselves, they anoint the eyes, because of seeing; the ears, because of hearing; the mouth, because of tasting or speech; the hands, because of touching; the feet, because of motion; and the reins, because the seat of lust. The oil, they tell us, aptly signifies the grace of the Spirit, with which the sick is invisibly anointed; and the form of words they use, is as follows, *By this holy anointing, God pardon thee by whatever thou hast offended, by the fault of thine eyes, nose, or touch.*

SON.

S O N.

Has this practice any foundation in scripture?

F A T H E R.

It seems to be derived from the practice of the primitive Christians, mentioned by the apostle James. They used to pray for the sick, and anoint them with oil: but when miracles ceased, and the gift of healing no longer remained in the Church, this practice was discontinued, till the Church of Rome thought fit to revive it, and work it up into a sacrament.

S O N.

As the Church of Rome supposes her members so effectually freed from the guilt of every deadly sin by the absolution of the priest, I cannot see what need there is of this anointing, except it would harden the skin, and fortify it against the fire of purgatory.

F A T H E R.

The priests would not be so much against their own interest, as to ascribe any such virtue to this anointing: but why should we wonder at the Church of Rome's introducing ceremonies which  
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are unnecessary. A thousand instances besides this might be produced, where unnecessary ceremonies are substituted in the place of real religion; and if the Church of Rome was stripped of these redundancies, where would her religion be? Take a general survey of her sentiments and practice under the various articles we have considered; and you will find so little inward reality in her religion, and so much outside show and sham, that we may, with the utmost certainty, conclude, her worship is vain: because her distinguishing character is, *teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.*

End of Dialogue VIII.

No. V. W DIA.

181 of the Church of Rome.

strange to me; and I should be glad to be further

**DIALOGUE the NINTH.**

FATHER. That marriage is prohibited to the Romish clergy, is a certain matter of fact; but is contrary to the natural right of mankind, and such a prohibition should be strange to me, that such a prohibition should be

*Of the Celibacy of the Romish Clergy; and their Religious Houses; with the Orders of Friars, Monks, and Nuns; and the Immoralities consequent on such Establishments.*

SON. On what account was celibacy, and a monkish retirement from the world, first introduced into the Church?

FATHER. During the terrible and bloody persecutions, which so often prevailed in the three first centuries, **S O N.**

**Y**OU informed me, Sir, in some of our former conversations, that a single life was held in high estimation by the Roman Catholics; and vows of perpetual chastity esteemed meritorious. I also learnt from our last interview, that though the Romans insist on matrimony being a sacrament, and, as such, necessary to salvation; yet is it esteemed so unholy and impure, that it is forbidden to the clergy; these things seem very

into W strange



strange to me ; and I should be glad to be further informed.

FATHER.

That marriage is prohibited to the Romish clergy, is a certain matter of fact ; but it seems strange to me, that such a prohibition should prevail amongst them, when the great apostle Peter, from whom his holiness, the Pope, pretends to derive his prerogative, was a married man.

SON.

On what account was celibacy, and a monkish retirement from the world, first introduced into the Church ?

FATHER.

During the terrible and bloody persecutions, which so often prevailed in the three first centuries, and were carried on by the Pagan emperors, the Christians were frequently driven into deserts, and obscure retreats ; where, under the shelter of solitude, they might escape the rage of persecution ; and being at first forced into this way of life, those who were of a melancholy disposition, were pleased with the charms of solitude and retirement ; and when the storm of persecution was overblown, they refused to return

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into the hurry and confusion of social life. These persons separated from the world, and, giving themselves up to meditation and prayer, began to be esteemed, for their simplicity of manners, and purity of life. The perplexed state of the world, when the Barbarians over-ran the empire, contributed, not a little, to the making this way of life more general; and those, who wanted to be celebrated for extraordinary sanctity, separated themselves from mankind, frequented desert places, and dwelt in caves, and other obscure retreats. This way of life, and abstaining from marriage, in process of time, became the objects of superstition; and persons of this turn of mind multiplied so fast, that they became a public nuisance, and a burden too great for the world to bear.

## S O N.

I perceive, that as clothes were first put on from necessity; but were afterwards perverted, so as to become the objects of pride and vanity; so a single and solitary life first began, from a desire to escape persecution; and afterwards perverted to ostentation and superstition: but at what time did this sort of life begin to be so much esteemed?

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FATHER.

FATHER.

In the fifth and sixth centuries, when error and false worship began to over-run the Church, this doctrine of celibacy and perpetual chastity began to be in high estimation; and as this course of life was venerated as the greatest purity and sanctity, it was recommended to the priests. This way of thinking prevailed so universally, that, in process of time, the whole priesthood were forbidden to marry: and those who had wives were obliged to put them away. It was esteemed meritorious in private persons, for husband and wife to live together as brother and sister; and various societies, both of men and women were formed; who made vows of perpetual chastity, and pretended to separate themselves from the world, in order to devote themselves entirely to God, and attend more closely to the duties of religion.

SON.

Is the celibacy of the priests, like other ceremonies of the Church of Rome, borrowed from the Pagans?

FATHER.

That I have not wronged the Roman Catholics, by asserting, that their religious ceremonies are

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borrowed

borrowed from the Pagan idolatry, is manifest, from a letter, which Pope Gregory the great, sent to this kingdom from Rome: it was directed to Austin the monk, who was then in England, instructing the natives in the Christian worship. "Whereas," says the Pope, "there is a custom among the Saxons, to slay abundance of oxen, and sacrifice them to the devil; you must not abolish that custom, but appoint a new festival to be kept, either on the day of the consecration of the churches, or on the birth day of the saints, whose relics are deposited there: and on these days, the Saxons may be allowed to make arbours round the temples changed into churches; to kill their oxen; and to feast as they did, while they were still Pagans." When this advice is considered, we need not wonder, that the Church of Rome is full of idolatry and superstition. But, as to the celibacy of priests, it is to be observed, that she hath the same example among the Pagans for this, as she has for the other branches of her superstition; if she will not allow, that she borrowed it from them, we will suppose, that the same spirit of superstition which dictated it to one, might also suggest it to the other.



SON.

I have read of the ancient Druids, who frequented woods and shady groves; and preached under mossy oaks. Is there any similarity between them and the Romish clergy?

FATHER.

There is almost an entire conformity between the laws, discipline, and hierarchy, of the ancient Druids, and the present Roman Catholic clergy. Nor is it the Druids only, who have set them the example of celibacy; for such unreasonable resistance to the dictates of nature, was esteemed by the ancient Pagans, the highest degree of sanctity and perfection; hence some of the Egyptian priests, to recommend themselves to the esteem of the people, not only made a vow of perpetual chastity, but put it out of their power to break it, by using means whereby they ceased to be men. And the Athenian priests, it is said, rendered themselves incapable of transgressing the vows they had made, by drinking the cold juice of hemlock: but however ready the Roman Catholic clergy may be, to imitate the Pagans in making such vows, I suppose they would not choose to imitate them, in the means they used, to secure the keeping of them.

S O N.

At what period was the marriage of the clergy prohibited?

F A T H E R.

In the first three hundred years after Christ, married and unmarried men were promiscuously advanced to every ecclesiastical dignity; but celibacy, chastity, and virginity, getting into high repute, and beginning to be esteemed marks of superior sanctity and holiness, it was moved, in the Council of Elvira, supposed to be held about the year 300, and passed into a law, that the priests should abstain from their wives. In the Council of Nice, which was held in the year 325, the same thing was moved, but warmly opposed; and the point was left undecided. But, in the Council of Aries, which was held in the year 340, it was decreed, that no man incumbered with a wife should be admitted to holy orders, unless he promised, with his wife's consent, no more to live with her like a husband. This decree was a considerable time, before it became universal; but being once introduced, it gained ground gradually amongst the churches, in different kingdoms: yet it did not take place in England, till

about

about the year 600, when Gregory the great before-mentioned, sent Austin the monk to propagate the gospel in Britain: and the celibacy of the clergy was not absolutely established in this kingdom till after the conquest.

S O N.

And how came the orders of monks and nuns to be established?

F A T H E R.

The fathers in the early ages of the Church, had a strange mistaken notion, of extraordinary merit attending celibacy in this life, and a superior reward reserved for it in the other; and on this account, they recommended it, not only to the clergy, but to persons of all ranks and stations, as the summit of Christian perfection. By their warm exhortations; and the high praises which they constantly bestowed, on virginity, celibacy, and continency, many of the clergy, and some amongst the laity, were wrought up to such a pitch of enthusiastical folly, that they made themselves eunuchs, thinking they by no other means could be qualified for the unnatural, but meritorious, state, which their superiors so warmly recommended. This unaccountable practice came so  
much

much in vogue at the beginning of the fourth century, that the Council of Nice was obliged to restrain it by a particular precept; and when this strange practice was restrained, the notion of the sanctity and meritorious holiness of such a life, still prevailed and increased, till it produced such a number of religious establishments of single persons, of both sexes, as became a burden to mankind.

## S O N.

But how came these establishments to be multiplied and diversified, in so extraordinary a manner?

## F A T H E R.

As they originally owed their birth to superstition; and as this, in various forms and combinations, crowded on the Church, from the sixth century till the Reformation; it is no wonder, that religious houses, of various sorts, became so numerous; for as superstition is sondest of her ugliest brats, it, in a few ages became meritorious to found and endow these religious retreats, as well as to enter into them.



S O N.

And I suppose the priests, on all occasions, took every opportunity to persuade great persons to found abbeys, monasteries, and convents, as a satisfaction for their sins?

F A T H E R.

That was certainly the case: for most of these places were founded by way of penance, or satisfaction, for notorious crimes; or that masses might be said in these retreats for the souls in purgatory. A gloomy tyrant, who had waded to a throne through seas of blood, would, on his death-bed, to ease his conscience, and make satisfaction for the guilt of murdering half mankind, found and endow one or more of these pious seminaries, where an hundred stout young fellows, separated from the society of the other sex, and pretending to superior sanctity and devotion, were supported without labour; and being maintained in pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness (Sodom's circumstances) it is no wonder they fell into, and became the most infamous perpetrators of, Sodom's sins.

S O N.

And I suppose the nunneries were founded by great princesses and ladies of quality?

F A T H E R.

FATHER.

It being esteemed highly meritorious to form such establishments, several of these places might be founded out of pride; they usually bearing the name of their founder; others out of piety; and a great number were founded by way of penance. It was esteemed the most meritorious work a great person could perform: and, no doubt, most of the nunneries were founded by queens, princesses, or ladies of the first quality: but if these places were intended for the abodes of virgin purity, history hath wronged them very much, if they are not most deplorably corrupted and perverted from the intention of their founders.

SON.

I suppose it is easier to make the vows of perpetual chastity than it is to keep them?

FATHER.

That you may clearly understand how these persons keep their vows, I shall give you an account of them, from an author of their own.

Clemangis, a Doctor of Paris, in his book, *De Stat. Eccl.* page 47: hath these words: "Concerning

“ cerning monks and abbies, what can I report  
“ that is commendable, being so petulant, undisc-  
“ ciplined, dissolute, and debauched : running up  
“ and down into common and dishonest places,  
“ and hating nothing so much as religion indeed.”

And page 53. “ They are worse than the Phari-  
“ sees of old ; ravenous wolves in sanctified sheep’s  
“ clothing, who, in words, pretend to forsake the  
“ world ; but, in deeds, with all possible fraud, de-  
“ ceit, lying, and cruelty, hunt after it ; making  
“ an outward appearance of austerity, chastity,  
“ obedience, humility, and holy simplicity ; but  
“ privately, in exquisite delicacies, and varieties  
“ of Epicureanism, excelling the wantonness of  
“ the most luxurious Heathens : just like Bel’s  
“ priests, devouring the oblations of the people ;  
“ and though not with their wives, yet with their  
“ strumpets and bastards, revelling with sumptuous  
“ cheer and overflowing goblets of wine, till they  
“ pollute every thing with their insatiate, horrid  
“ lusts.” And, that you may know the nuns were  
not at all behind hand with the friars for wicked-  
ness, hear how he compliments those sacred vota-  
ries, page 56. “ Shame,” saith he, “ forbids me  
“ to speak of them, lest I should mention not a  
“ company of virgins dedicated to God ; but  
“ stewed, deceitful, impudent harlots, with their  
X “ fornications

“fornications and incestuous works: for what,  
 “I pray you, are nunneries now-a-days, but  
 “temples of Venus, and execrable brothel-houses;  
 “the harbours and rendezvous of wanton gallants,  
 “where they satisfy their raging lusts: so that  
 “now, the vailing of a nun is all one, as if you  
 “prostituted her to be a whore.”

## S O N.

If the abbies, monasteries, friaries, nunneries,  
 and convents, were filled with such persons as  
 these, it is very well they were suppressed: but  
 was this generally the case?

## F A T H E R.

Considering the prodigious number of these  
 places, if they are all like the above described,  
 the case is bad indeed: but if we consider the  
 means, by which these religious retreats are filled  
 with votaries, it is not likely it should be other-  
 wise. Great numbers take sanctuary in these  
 religious houses, to shun the arm of public justice  
 which pursues them, for enormous and capital  
 crimes; and others are forced into such retreats,  
 not from any inclination they have to quit the  
 world;



world; not from any desire to preserve their chastity, love to solitude and retirement, emulation of superior sanctity, or turn of mind to devotional exercises; but to gratify the pride or avarice of their friends.

SON.

Why should the pride of families oblige their children to such a way of life?

FATHER.

In great families where there are several children, and circumstances but low, it is a very common practice, in the Roman Catholic countries, to send several of the younger branches of the family into these retreats, that the estate may be sufficient to support the eldest son in such a manner as may maintain the honor and splendor of the family: and, if the young ladies are forced or over-persuaded to take the veil, contrary to their inclinations, it is easy to guess what the consequence will be. Nor is the case of those much better, who being crossed in their inclinations, respecting marriage, grow out of humour with the world, and too hastily and inconsiderately take those vows, which put them into a situation for which nature never designed them.

X 2

SON.

S O N.

It seems very strange to me, that the Romish clergy should choose a way of life so painful, as perpetually resisting the impulses of nature, when the apostles, as we are expressly told by Ignatius the Martyr, who was their cotemporary and disciple; were all married men, except the apostle John.

F A T H E R.

That the apostles were married, is manifest from St. Paul's own words, *Have not I power*, says he, *to lead about a sister or a wife, as well as Cephas and the other apostles!* And the same apostle, when foretelling the corruptions which would over-run the Church; and describing the false teachers, who would arise, informs us, that one of their innovations would be, *forbidding to marry*. Are the Romish clergy more holy than the apostles themselves? Or shall Popes and Popish priests presume to alter the original laws of nature, and forbid what the supreme governor of the universe, by the establishment of those laws, and by his own will expressly declared, both honored and commanded!

S O N.

S O N.

I suppose this institution must owe its birth to the desire of exalting the priesthood, and setting them off with the appearance of superior sanctity and holiness; but it must be a great degree of pride which could excite them to bow their necks to a yoke so oppressive and intolerable; and load themselves with a burden they were not able to bear.

F A T H E R.

It would be well for them, if the same pride, which excited them to make such laws, would induce them to be more careful in keeping them: for really, no set of men are more remarkable in history, for every kind of lewdness and debauchery, than the Popish priesthood; from his holiness the Pope, down to the lowest order of the clergy.

S O N.

How many different orders of friars, monks, and nuns, are there amongst the Papists?

F A T H E R.

That is a very hard question. These societies in the dark ages, when Popery universally prevailed,

vailed; were multiplied in every part of the world. Mr. Gavin tells us, that there were seventy different orders of these devotees in Spain: and how many there were in England before the Reformation, I cannot tell.

S O N.

Then you apprehend the fasting and mortification, which the Church of Rome enjoins on all her votaries, but particularly on her religious houses, is of no great service to the mortifying their lusts and corruptions; and keeping them within the bounds of reason and religion.

F A T H E R.

Though almost the whole year in the Romish calendar is divided between her fasts and her festivals; and though her fasts fill up almost half the year, her professors are very little the better: for the method they have of keeping their fasts, is no fasting at all, but only changing their diet. The eating of fish and sweetmeats, and drinking wine in great plenty, is no profanation of the holy fast: but how abominable it is to touch the leg of a lark!

S O N.



S O N.

What reason can be assigned why fish should be allowed in their fasts.

F A T H E R.

Would you know the worthy reason why fish is thus preferred, their famous Durandus explains thus learnedly the mystery: "Fish," saith he, "is eaten on fasting-days, because God never "curst the waters: and they escaped the curse, "because remission of sins should be by the "water of baptism: for this element is most worthy, which washeth away filthiness, and upon "which the Spirit of the Lord moved, before the "making of the world. But God curst the "earth in the works of man; and, therefore, it "is not lawful in fasting, to eat any kind of flesh "which liveth on the earth, as four-footed beasts, "and birds, &c.

S O N.

And on what foundation is the long fast of Lent established?

F A T H E R.

Because Moses fasted forty days in the mount, and Christ forty days in the wilderness, before he began his public ministry.

S O N!

S O N.

And are we commanded in the gospel to imitate them?

F A T H E R.

The Jews, under the legal dispensation, were not commanded to imitate Moses; nor are the Christians commanded to imitate Christ. There are no particular days of fasting appointed in the New Testament; every nation, every particular congregation, every particular person may appoint a solemn day of fasting and humiliation, on any great occasion: but the sham fasts of the Church of Rome are as unscriptural and ridiculous as the rest of her superstition.

S O N.

Before we conclude this conversation, I should be glad to be informed of the miracles so much talked of in the Church of Rome.

F A T H E R.

Indeed, Son, you are leading me into a wide field. You may remember the apostle Paul, whose words I referred you to, in the beginning of these conferences, when describing the appearance

ance of antichrist, says, that his coming is after the workings of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and all the deceivableness of unrighteousness. This prediction is manifestly fulfilled in a long list of Popish miracles. The pretended miracles wrought by her saints; the pretended miracles wrought by her consecrated host; and those ridiculous tales of revelations and miraculous events, which have been hatched in her religious houses, I suppose, would fill fifty volumes in folio. That you may see what sort of stuff the Church of Rome imposes on the world in the name of miracles, I shall present you with one of the miracles pretended to be performed by the consecrated host, taken out of a book, published by authority, at Lisle, in 1672, in which are seventy-three of such kind of miracles.

“ In the year 1317, on the 25th of July, in a  
“ place called Vivieres, near the town of Tamay,  
“ in the County of Looz, the vicar of the said  
“ place was required to carry the sacrament to a  
“ sick person: he went thither, and being ar-  
“ rived at the house, he laid down the box, in  
“ which the consecrated host was, on a table, to  
“ go and hear the confession of the dying person;  
“ meanwhile, some of the house indiscreetly came  
“ near

" near the box, and touched the host with great  
 " irreverence. The priest, after he had prepa-  
 " red his penitent, took the box, and came to  
 " the bedside to communicate him. Upon open-  
 " ing the box, he found that the host was all  
 " bloody, and spotted the linen that was within.  
 " This sight cast him into a great fright, so that  
 " he durst not communicate his sick man; but  
 " having comforted him, and respited the com-  
 " munion to another time, he carried back the  
 " box and the host to the Church. The parish  
 " priest, knowing what had passed, commanded  
 " the Vicar to carry the host to the Monastery of  
 " Herkmorode, to consult a venerable and learn-  
 " ed priest, who lived there. He did so; but as he  
 " was upon the road to accomplish it, the mares,  
 " asses, and other beasts in the field, paid their  
 " acknowledgments to their Creator, adoring  
 " him with bended knees; and the Vicar, arri-  
 " ving at the church of the Monastery, two bells  
 " in the steeple rang of their own accord. At  
 " his arrival, they sung the mass of the first of  
 " August (*St. Peter ad vincula*). The priest that  
 " celebrated, knowing nothing of what had  
 " passed, yet went back a little way from the altar,  
 " to adore the holy sacrament with a low bow-  
 " ing of his head: while he did this, our Lord  
 " appeared



"appeared to him in a human form, with a crown  
"upon his head; which was not seen by any  
"but by himself. At the same time one pos-  
"sessed was delivered from the evil spirit: and  
"since that time, the holy sacrament has not  
"ceased, nor now ceases, to produce some mira-  
"culous effects."

S O N.

These things are miraculous indeed: and, I  
think, no less empty and ridiculous.

F A T H E R.

\* It is almost impossible to conceive, what a pro-  
digious number of these empty, idle, ridiculous,  
tales, have been propagated in the Church of  
Rome; and, really one would be astonished at the  
stupidity of mankind, when it must be supposed,  
that these tales are believed, or the miracle-makers  
would not have been at the trouble of inventing  
so many. You see to what a deplorable condi-  
tion mankind was reduced, by the tyranny of  
Rome; who not only assumes an absolute domi-  
nion over the faith of her votaries, but presumes  
to insult the understanding and common sense of  
mankind, by proposing such foolish, improbable  
tales to their belief.

Thus,

Thus, I have led you through the several branches of the Roman worship; and have considered those of her doctrines, wherein she differs from the Protestants; and, if you examine every part of her worship, her doctrine and discipline, with care and attention, you will find them so minutely to answer to the character of antichrist, as drawn in the holy scriptures; you will find them so empty and ridiculous, so full of idolatry and superstition, so repugnant to the known nature of things, so insulting to the common sense and reason of mankind, and so destructive to the life, spirit, and power, of real religion, that I do not fear your turning Roman Catholic.

SON.

Indeed, Sir, you need not.

FATHER.

What you have seen is only one part of the character of the Church of Rome: these are only the playful tricks and antics of the beast; but what is she, when she is roused into rage: she is all soft and insinuating where her devices prevail, and has every art of persuasion and address; but is bloody and cruel as a fiend, whenever she is contradicted and opposed.

SON.

S O N.

What are the principal arts of persuasion and address by which the Church of Rome attempts to propagate her errors?

F A T H E R.

She, like the Pharisees of old, is very industrious in the propagation of her tenets, and may be said to *compass sea and land, to make one proselyte*. Her arts are many and various; but in general her agents use such as these: they industriously endeavour to impress her principles and practices, with the stamp of antiquity, though their antiquity rises no higher than times of great degeneracy and corruption: they pretend great veneration for the primitive fathers of the Christian Church; but carefully suppress every thing in their writings, which suits not their purpose: they advance their doctrines with great confidence; and boast of victory in all their controversial contests; craftily insinuating, that all the Protestants, who have taste or learning, are of their opinion: they promise no less than an absolute certainty of salvation, to all that are in the communion of their Church; and assert the certain damnation of every person, who is not of

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their

their sentiment: they craftily endeavour to inspire an awful dread of enquiry in the hearts of mankind; and would make them afraid to think, for fear they should fall into heresy; telling them, *that the having the least scruple in their minds, concerning the truth of any of the Church's dictates, is a most damnable sin*: they endeavour to train up their votaries in ignorance, and represent the Bible so dark, mysterious, and doubtful, that it is dangerous for the unlearned to peruse it: they carefully endeavour to make the best advantage of the unity of the Papists, and the various parties and sects among the Protestants; though they have various opinions and disputes amongst themselves: and the different denominations of the Protestants are the consequences of religious liberty, and a laudable spirit of free enquiry. They give upon all occasions, a black and frightful account of the character of the Protestants; and load them with all manner of unjust reproach: while they paint their own clergy in the most amiable colours; and exhibit them under the character of the greatest of saints; and lastly, they make the greatest shew of charity, benevolence, goodness, kindness, condescension, and every christian virtue; taking every opportunity to relieve the poor, sick, and afflicted, amongst their adherents. In this practice, they



they are worthy to be imitated by the Protestants; though the ostentation of it, and the motives which induce them to it, are to be abhorred. Such are the methods, which the agents of Rome take, to spread the pernicious poison of their superstition, where they have not power or authority to establish it by force: but when once they get the power in their hands, they have other methods of management.

S O N.

What are the other methods by which Rome maintains her authority, and propagates her religion?

F A T H E R.

You may remember the woman, described in the Revelation of St. John, *held in her hand a golden cup, full of abomination, and filthiness of her fornication.* The smooth, insinuating, delusive arts, which the Church of Rome makes use of, to spread her destructive tenets, are hereby aptly described; for we are told, that *all nations have drank of the wine of the wrath or rage of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her; so enticing and alluring*

ring are her various arts, and such the success which hath attended them: and in this way she seeks to insinuate herself into the favor of those nations, where she hath lost her authority. But wherever she hath erected her standard, and reigns in all her purple pride; if the eyes of mankind are opened, and will not submit to her unrighteous dominion, she is soon roused into rage, and becomes the most furious, fiery, cruel, blood-thirsty tyrant, that ever cursed the earth.—Of this, I shall give you an account at another opportunity: and you will see the justice and propriety of the application of this vision to Rome, when the apostle says, *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* The sight, I am sure, will fill you with amazement and horror; and you will readily join the holy apostle in the following words, *And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*

**End of Dialogue IX.**

DIALOGUE the Tenth.

*Of the Bloody, Persecuting Spirit and Infernal  
Cruelty of the Church of Rome.*

S O N.

**I** HAVE reflected with uneasiness and concern, on the account you gave, at the conclusion of our last discourse, respecting the persecution and cruelty of the Church of Rome. By the few hints you dropped, I am sure the case must be very bad, and I am almost afraid to enquire further into a business, which, I suppose, is so horrid and shocking to humanity. But whatever pain the exhibition of such monstrous and shocking characters may give, I perceive my mind will not rest, till I know the worst; and therefore, Sir, I must beg you to resume the subject.

FATHER.

The persecution and cruelty of the Church of Rome, opens a large field to our enquiry; and really, it is a scene of amazement and horror, a fatal field of blood. The unrighteous dominion and boundless authority she hath assumed; her horrid, abominable, self-exaltation, and pride; her inveterate rancor and hatred; burning against all that dare to oppose and disobey her commands; her most horrid invention of tortures and wantonness of cruelty; the various kinds of deaths she hath inflicted; and the seas of blood she hath shed, would fill several volumes; and it will only be a few loose hints which can be comprised in our present conversation.

SON.

On what authority does Rome pretend to put persons to death, on account of matters of opinion, when every one hath a natural right to judge for himself. Have not I, if I had the power, as much right to put the Pope to death, because he differs in opinion from me, as he has to condemn me, because I differ from him?

FATHER.



## FATHER.

Certainly you have, according to the principles of religious liberty, and the right to private judgment: but you must not advance that doctrine at Rome; for you must know, that his Holiness sets himself up *above all that is called God, or is worshipped*. God allows the right of private judgment: he would have every man see with his own eyes, make use of his reason and understanding, and judge for himself. But this the Pope denies: he sets himself up not only as the supreme head of the church, but the great governor of the world; the kingdoms of which he has presumed to give to whom he pleased. Pope Alexander the sixth gave the Indies to the Spaniards; who, in consequence of this, proceeded to the most horrid cruelties with the natives of that vast country, and shed the blood of a million of men and women. The words of the Pope's bull are, "By the authority of God, which was given to the Popes in the person of Peter, and which they hold as vicars of Christ, we give to thee all the isles and firm land to be found, with their cities, villages, rights, &c."

## S O N.

The Pope indeed hath set himself in the place of God, if he thus looks down from his stupendous

dous height, and parcels out the world as he pleases.

FATHER.

He in this presumes to reign in the kingdom of men, and give it to whomsoever he will. But that is not all; he pretends to infallibility in matters of conscience and religion; and in this, he lets us know, he will be obeyed: "It is sacrilege," we are told, "to question the Pope's actions, and downright Paganism not to obey him; he is cursed of God who violates the Pope's censures, and he must be obeyed on penalty of our souls." On these high pretences to supremacy and infallibility, he presumes to deal with heretics.

SON.

What are these heretics, who are branded with such reproach by the Church of Rome, and followed with such implacable resentment?

FATHER.

They are upright, honest men, who will make use of the rational powers which God has given them; they make the bible the foundation of their religion: as to the Pope, they acknowledge him

him not, nor will they follow him one step further than he follows Christ: such men as these have always been the objects of the Pope's resentment; and the thunder and lightning of Rome hath been employed for their destruction.

S O N.

And how does the Church of Rome proceed against such persons as these?

F A T H E R.

She proceeds against them, first, by excommunication; then by depriving them of their natural and civil rights; and, finally, by torturing and putting to death.

S O N.

What is the form of their excommunication?

F A T H E R.

I shall give you the form of an excommunication, for the crime of heresy, taken out of Sir Henry Spelman's *Glossary*, published in a paper called *The Englishman*, about eighty years ago, No. 53, which is as follows:

"By the authority of the Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the holy  
" and

" and immaculate Virgin, and of all the holy  
 " angels, archangels, thrones, &c. and of the  
 " holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and evan-  
 " gelists, and of the holy innocents, &c. We  
 " excommunicate and anathematize this thief,  
 " or malefactor, N. and drive him from all the  
 " households of the holy church of God; that he  
 " may be delivered over to be tortured with  
 " Dathan and Abiram. As fire is extinguished  
 " by water, so may his lamp be extinguished  
 " for ever and ever, *unless he shall repent, and*  
 " *make full satisfaction. Amen.* Let him be  
 " cursed by God the Father, the Creator of man;  
 " let him be cursed by God the Son, who suf-  
 " fered for man; let him be cursed by God the  
 " Holy Ghost, who was poured out in baptism;  
 " let him be cursed by the holy cross, which  
 " Christ ascended; let the holy Mother of God,  
 " Mary the perpetual Virgin, curse him; let  
 " holy Michael curse him; let all the angels and  
 " archangels, principalities and powers, and all  
 " the militia of the heavenly host, curse him.  
 " May the laudable company of patriarchs and  
 " prophets, curse him; may St. John, the fore-  
 " runner of Christ, curse him; may all the apos-  
 " tles of Christ, and the four evangelists, curse  
 " him; may the wonderful army of martyrs and  
 " confessors,



“ confessors, &c. curse him; may heaven and  
“ earth, and all that is holy therein, curse him.  
“ Let him be cursed wherever he shall be; whe-  
“ ther in the house or in the field, in the high-  
“ way or in the foot-path, in the wood or in the  
“ water, or in the church. Let him be accursed  
“ living, dying, eating, drinking, hungering,  
“ thirsting, fasting, slumbering, sleeping, watch-  
“ ing, walking, standing, sitting, lying, work-  
“ ing, resting, and blood-letting. Let him be ac-  
“ cursed in all the powers of his body; let him be  
“ accursed within and without; curse him in  
“ every hair; curse him in his brain; curse him  
“ in the crown of his head, in his temples, in  
“ his forehead, in his ears, in his eye-brows, in  
“ his eyes, in his cheeks, in his cheek-bones, in  
“ his nostrils, in his eye-teeth, in his grinders,  
“ in his lips, in his throat, in his shoulders, in  
“ his arms, in his hands, in his breast, in his  
“ heart, and in all his entrails, even up to the  
“ stomach, in his reins, in his groin, in his  
“ thighs, in his private parts, in his hips, in his  
“ shins, in his knees, in his feet, in his joints,  
“ and in his nails. Let him be accursed in the  
“ whole structure of his members: from the  
“ crown of the head even to the sole of his foot,  
“ let there be no soundness in him. Let Christ,  
“ the Son of the living God, curse him with the  
“ whole

" whole power of his might. Let heaven, with  
 " all the powers that move therein, rise up  
 " against him to his damnation, *unless he shall*  
 " *repent, and make full satisfaction.* Amen.  
 " Amen."

S O N.

If the poor heretics are pursued with the spirit which breathes in this excommunication, I think they will find no mercy.

F A T H E R.

When things are brought to this issue, if they cannot get out of the power of Rome, she soon follows them with what she calls her wholesome severities, but which are really infernal cruelties; their goods are confiscated; their dearest rights and privileges taken from them; their persons are imprisoned, and followed with bitter vengeance, even to death.

S O N.

And how does the Church of Rome proceed to execute her vengeance on those she calls heretics?

F A T H E R.

She hath erected a spiritual court, which she calls the inquisition, by which she deals with all

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she

she can get into her power: the rest she endeavors to destroy by murders, assassinations, plots, and massacres.

S O N.

What kind of place is the inquisition?

F A T H E R.

The inquisition is a tribunal the most unjust, arbitrary, and cruel, that ever was erected: it is a kind of spiritual court, and the professed design of its establishment is, to make inquisition for, and judge and condemn heretics; and it has been infamous, in all ages, for the most unfair and arbitrary proceedings, monstrous injustice, and inhuman cruelty.

S O N.

Is there an inquisition in every kingdom which owns the Papal authority?

F A T H E R.

The vigilant successor of St. Peter, who pretends to have received commission from Christ to feed his sheep, would have been glad to have erected his spiritual tribunal in every country: but several nations, how blind soever their super-

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stitution

stitution might have made them, had too much justice and humanity to permit this horrid engine of hell to be set up amongst them; but the kings of Spain and Portugal gladly received it.

S O N.

And what are the superior rulers and judges in this tribunal?

F A T H E R.

You may be sure they are priests; for their tribunal is called the Holy Inquisition. History informs us, that at the inquisition in Spain there are three inquisitors; and there is a superiority and subordination amongst them. They exercise an arbitrary and uncontrollable power and authority over the lives and fortunes of all who are so unhappy as to fall into their hands; and are not subject, or in any sense accountable to the king, his judges, or magistrates, but carry on their trials entirely independent of the civil power; and have the authority of arresting persons of high rank, if accused of the crime of heresy.

S O N.

And in what manner do they proceed?

FATHER.



FATHER.

An edict is published by the inquisition, enjoining all who know or suspect any to be guilty of heresy, to inform against them, on pain of the greater excommunication. The most infamous persons, though they may before have been convicted of perjury, are allowed to accuse; and upon the testimony of any *one* informer, a warrant is made out, and the criminal arrested;

SON.

And where is he imprisoned?

FATHER.

The inquisitors have a prison of their own; the most private, dark, and dreadful that can be imagined. These works of darkness are carried on in the night: the family is called up; and so great is the dread of this awful tribunal, that none dare resist: the unhappy criminal is taken away from his family under the cover of surrounding darkness, and lodged within the walls of the inquisition, where he is absolutely separated from all connection with his friends, who seldom see him any more: his effects are seized, and he is promised to have them restored when his innocence appears; but let his crime be ever so small,

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or be he accused ever so falsely, he finds such  
usage, that he is glad to get clear with the loss  
of all he has.

**S O N.**

And how are these spiritual trials carried on?

**F A T H E R.**

Not in the manner the criminal causes are car-  
ried on in this country; there is neither witness  
nor jury, but the criminal is sworn, and com-  
manded to accuse himself.

**S O N.**

That is a very unfair way of proceeding in-  
deed!

**F A T H E R.**

And if he declares, he does not know any  
thing which he has done that is of a criminal  
nature, he is remanded back to prison, and ad-  
vised to recollect; and, after some months, he is  
sent for to audience again, and commanded to  
confess; if he still refuses, he is put to the torture;  
which sometimes ends in death, and then he is  
privately buried: if, by the extremity of torture,  
he confesses things he is not guilty of, he is pro-  
ceeded

ceeded against accordingly : if they cannot oblige him to confess, after a long series of time, the articles of his accusation are read, and he is separately examined on each.

S O N.

And how do they bring their matters to a conclusion ?

F A T H E R.

The criminal is never permitted to know his accusers; and his sentence is arbitrarily determined by his judges, after having suffered the most inhuman tortures, in the dreadful caverns of the inquisition. Once in two or three years, there comes what they call an act of faith; Then the several prisoners receive sentence, and walk in procession, clothed in various ridiculous habits : the obstinate heretics are burnt to death; and those who are penitent, after their goods are confiscated, are enjoined some severe penance to make satisfaction, and let go.

S O N.

When a person is put to the torture, and by its extremity excited to confess, I suppose, they not only extort what they can come at by this means,

means, but excite him to accuse his friends and acquaintance, that they may carry on their infernal trade.

FATHER.

That is their constant practice; and the most horrid cruelties and exquisite tortures are used: the tormentor is dressed like the devil; and the inquisitor, and generally a bishop, attend, to urge the poor tortured criminal to confess.

SON.

And do they proceed against persons in the inquisition for very small crimes?

FATHER.

A very small reflection rouses the indignation of the priesthood, and is fatal where there is an inquisition; as is evident by the account given by Mr. Webster, who was an officer in the inquisition; but, shocked at their horrid and infernal cruelties, he made his escape to England. He tells us, that a nobleman, a friend of his, who was lately married, was walking in his garden with his lady, and seeing two bare-footed, bare-headed capuchin friars pass by, after he supposed them out of hearing, he expressed his surprise



prise that any person could be so insatuated, as to suppose such a particular dress, and manner of life, could be meritorious. This conversation was unhappily heard by the friars, and reported to the inquisition; and Mr. Webster was ordered to take their guard, and bring his unfortunate friend before them. It was midnight when they knocked at the nobleman's door, which was opened by a servant as soon as they were told it was the holy inquisition. The party being conducted to the room where the new-married couple were fast asleep: the first who waked was the lady, who, seeing such a crew of ruffians in the room, screamed out; for which she was saluted by one of them with a blow on the face, that made the blood gush out. Mr. Webster was much enraged at this; and, asking the fellow what authority he had for such an unparallelled piece of cruelty, threatened him severely, and afterwards had him punished in an exemplary manner. This waked the husband; who, being very much surprised at what had happened, casting his eyes on Mr. Webster, cried out, "Ah! my friend, is it you?" "Yes," replied he, "it is: and you must immediately rise, and follow me." This he soon complied with. Accordingly, he was conducted to the inquisition; where he was told, he

he was certainly guilty of some great crime, and that he had a week given him to recollect what it was, and accuse himself. All that time he was confined in a dungeon, and fed with nothing but bread and water, in order to weaken him, and render him less able to undergo the torture. At the end of the week he was brought, in the night, before the infernal tribunal, and so altered, that he was scarce known to be the same : and upon his declaring, that he was not conscious of any thing culpable, he was immediately led to the torture ; which was thus inflicted upon him : by means of four cords, which came over four pulleys at each corner of the room, he was hoisted up to the ceiling, where, by a sudden jerk, all his bones were dislocated. After he had hung some time in this deplorable condition, the inquisitor general, thinking he had not suffered enough, commanded them to slacken the cord, in order to let him fall with a shock to the ground. This, after what was done before, is thought to be one of the greatest torments that human nature is capable of sustaining : but when they came to inflict it, they found the unhappy man was already dead : upon which they buried him in a private manner, and sent a note to his wife, desiring her to offer up prayers for his soul in all the churches in Rome.

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**S O N.**  
This is a dreadful account indeed: such horrid injustice and cruelty, I should think, would rouse the righteous vengeance of the skies, and bring down peculiar and distinguishing wrath on all who are concerned in this wicked tribunal.

**F A T H E R.**

If history is true, injustice and cruelty are not the only sins committed within the consecrated walls of the inquisition. Mr. Gavin gives us a relation of a young lady, who was arrested in the night, and taken from her father's house to that detested place; where she was seduced by one of the lord inquisitors, being induced by threatened tortures to comply with his desires. This young lady gives her own history; and relates, that after this, she was kept as a mistress by her seducer six years, being fourteen years of age when she was taken from her father's house. She says, she found about sixty young ladies in the same circumstances with herself, who were kept by the three inquisitors, and known by the different colours of their dresses to which they belonged; each holy father having about twenty at his command. The young lady further relates, that they

lost

lost six or eight every year out of their number, but that their places were always supplied with fresh ones. It was apprehended, the inquisitors were tired of those who were missed, and that they were murdered in private, to prevent the infamous lewdness of the holy fathers being discovered. This lady declares, that she was released by the French army in the year 1706: the inquisitors having been so bold as to excommunicate the commander, he, with his troops, turned them out, and released the prisoners, to the number of about four hundred.

## S O N.

If such accounts as these are true, the Inquisition is a place, which, for all kind of wickedness, one would not expect to find on this side-hell: but at what age of the church was this black tribunal erected?

## F A T H E R.

It was first erected by Pope Innocent the third, about the year 1200: and Dominic, who afterwards was fainter, was the first inquisitor. The business of the inquisition is, to search out, and deal with heretics. This infernal tribunal did not rise to its full power and authority till about

the



the year 1530, when it was first set up in Spain, and soon after in Portugal; but it was never admitted in England, though it was attempted in the reign of Queen Mary. The inquisition will remain an eternal reproach to the Roman Catholic religion. The unjust and arbitrary proceedings of this court; the variety of tortures which the miserable victims are forced to suffer; the perpetual scenes of horror and distress, and the unrelenting cruelty with which the unhappy persons are pursued, all unite to declare, that the Popish doctrine of burning and destroying heretics is a tenet which came from the infernal regions; and that a church which permits such horrid and infamous practices, looks more like an infernal fury than the virgin spouse of Christ.

S O N.

It is time to turn our thoughts from an object so horrid and shocking to humanity as the inquisition: but I am afraid the track of our contemplations still lies through a field of blood; for we are considering the conduct of the *woman*, who is represented to be *drunken with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of Jesus*.

FATHER.

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FATHER.

It is not only *the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of Jesus*, which hath been shed by the Church of Rome; for the ambition of her Popes, and the methods she took to enforce her authority and establish her unrighteous dominion, hath embroiled the world; and, on account of her unjust usurpation, hundreds of battles have been fought, cities have been in flames, and empires soaked in blood. For the pride and insolence of the Popes of Rome hath often risen to such heights, that they have trampled on the necks of kings and emperors; and hector'd and bullied the whole world: so that the yoke of Rome hath been so intolerable, that mankind have not been able to bear it.

SON.

Then the tyranny of Rome extends to civil affairs, as well as religious.

FATHER.

Pope Adrian condemned and burnt a preacher, whose name was Arnold, in the twelfth century, because he had asserted, that the Pope had nothing to do with temporal affairs. So that, if we had no regard to religion, we should have the utmost reason

reason to dread Popery, as men and members of society; for her doctrines and practices are as destructive to civil liberty as they are to religious.

But how does the Church of Rome proceed against heretics, in those countries where there is no inquisition?

FATHER.

If the king of the country is a member of that Church, the Pope engages him in his quarrel; and the fourth Council of Lateran, having made a decree, that all heretics should be burnt or otherwise destroyed; the prince is required to find them out, and bring them to execution: for the same Council decreed a sentence of excommunication against such princes, who, being admonished by the Church, shall neglect to purge their land from the filth of heresy: and a remissness in this pious work hath cost some princes their crown and life. Henry the fourth of France was murdered by Ravilliac, for shewing too much favour to the Hugonots.

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regard

S O N.

At what period did the Church of Rome begin her persecution?

F A T H E R.

The Waldenses were the first considerable body of men, who set themselves to oppose the tyranny and idolatry of Rome; and, of consequence, the first who felt the fury of her resentment. Against them, the Pope first set up the inquisition, which was carried on, by that monster of cruelty, Dominic; but this being too slow a way of proceeding, the Pope published a bull in the year 1215, offering pardons and indulgences to all who would arm in his cause; and he by this means got together a prodigious army: which, according to historians, at one time amounted to five hundred thousand men; with these he carried destruction and slaughter through the country inhabited by these pious people, whose principles were much the same, as the Protestants are now: and we are informed, that above a million of them were slain.

S O N.

How long was this before the Reformation?

F A T H E R.



FATHER.

About three hundred years : and when the light of the gospel, in its purity and spirituality, began to dawn, all the arts of Rome were employed to put it out. Luther, one of the first reformers, escaped by a very particular providence, which attended him about thirty years ; but John Hus, Jerome of Prague, and Lord Cobham, were burnt to death for heresy by the infernal cruelty of Rome.

SON.

But they could not, with all their cruelty, put a stop to the glorious work of the reformation?

FATHER.

Neither rage, cruelty, murders, massacres, nor all the horrid inventions of hell were wanting on the part of Rome. Of this the massacre of Paris, which happened in the year 1571, is a memorable instance. The Protestants having increased in France, the Papists laid a plot for their destruction : and they were decoyed to Paris by a marriage between the King of Navarre, who was a Protestant, and the Lady Margaret, sister to the French king. The Protestants were persuaded,

that all was peace; and several noble persons who were at the head of the party, attended the nuptials: but the cruel Romans were working in darkness, and meditating scenes of murder and blood; spies were employed to examine every house, and bring them an account where the Protestants lodged, and a general massacre was determined: St. Bartholomew's was to be the fatal night; and the ringing a bell at midnight in the king's palace, the bloody signal. The murderers take the alarm, and rush like furies on their prey; the great Admiral Coligni falls, and in three days ten thousand Protestants share his fate, and join in death whom they formerly joined in rational worship and exalted praise. The bigot king beholds the carnage from his window's height, and stupidly applauds the horrid deed!

S O N.

These are thy triumphs, thy exploits, O Rome!

F A T H E R.

They were not able to stop the progress of the reformation in the reign of King Henry the eighth, and King Edward the sixth. But in the succeeding

succeeding reign, Rome again erected her bloody standard, and England severely felt her cruelty and rage. A weak woman swayed the sceptre, and Popish priests again overspread the land. The saints of the Most High were led to the bloody tribunal of Romish superstition, and hundreds of innocent persons were condemned to the flames. The most unfeeling cruelty was practised on them, in their last moments; and the trade of death was sport to the horrid sons of superstition. Such were the annals of Mary, and the triumphs of a cruel Bonner, a blood-thirsty Gardiner, and a whole Council of Popish prelates and priests disgraced the British history.

**S O N.**  
I think we may justly say, that Popery is always the same; but England may rejoice that the reign of Mary was short.

**F A T H E R.**

Since the death of that infatuated princess, the Popish superstition hath not been able to rear its hated head in these kingdoms. Queen Elizabeth was excommunicated; her kingdom was given to the Spaniards; and her subjects absolved from

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their

their allegiance : but she stood her ground ; the Spanish armada was defeated ; and the Protestant religion prevailed : but the restless ambition and malice of Rome could not be quelled. In the succeeding reign, a most horrid and villainous plot was formed, which was no less than to blow up King James the first and his parliament with gunpowder ; and at one dire explosion to end the Protestant religion : but Divine Providence interposed, and saved this nation, when on the brink of ruin ; the plot was discovered, and the wicked authors brought to justice.

## S O N.

But did not a terrible massacre in Ireland soon follow ?

## F A T H E R.

In the reign of Charles the first, the Protestants in Ireland were most inhumanly butchered, and almost two hundred thousand persons were murdered, with circumstances of the most infernal cruelty, by the agents of Rome. The doctrine taught by the Romish priests, to prepare the minds of their bigots for these horrid villainies, was, *That Protestants were not to be suffered to live amongst them ; that it was no harm*



to kill them, but a mortal sin to protect them. Thus inspired by their priests, with the rage, cruelty, and fury of hell, the Irish Roman Catholics fell on the secure and inoffensive Protestants. Murder and unheard-of cruelty marked their way: death, long and lingering, in all its ghastly horrors, was their sport; and Irish streams ran innocent blood. These monsters of cruelty inspired their children with the like murdering rage; and hundreds of murders were committed so shocking to humanity, that I forbear to mention them. This is but little above a century ago, and almost within the memory of man; and this is all the evidence which the nature of the case is capable of, that Rome is still the same; and her bigotted zealots would not shudder at the like cruelties, if their priests required them of them.

Thus I have given you a short view of the cruelty and persecution of the Church of Rome; and very short and imperfect it is: a folio volume would not contain it, were I to enter largely and methodically into the subject; but short as it is, I dare say, your mind wants to be relieved from the contemplation of such horrid and shocking characters, and such a train of disgusting ideas, as they must necessarily crowd on the imagination.

SON.

**SON.**

Such horrid scenes of mingled carnage and blood, indeed, are shocking to humanity.

**FATHER.**

I shall only observe, that the cruelties of Rome cannot be paralleled in history: it is reported, that Pope Julius the second, during the seven years of his Popedom, destroyed two hundred thousand Protestants; and some, who have made the calculation, have affirmed, that Rome, in the space of forty years, destroyed thirty millions of people: such is her blood-thirsty, cruel, and tyrannical spirit!

This is the picture of Romish superstition and cruelty. And now, Son, review the whole that I have related concerning this Anti-christian Church; and let me ask you the same question, which you asked me at our first conference, What do you think of the Church of Rome?

**SON.**

I may safely return the answer in your own words: my opinion of the Church of Rome is, that it is the greatest corruption of the Christian Religion—that by it, the life, power, and spirituality of the gospel are taken away, and a parcel

cel of heathenish trumpery introduced in their stead—that its various tenets are calculated to aggrandize the priesthood, and delude and enslave the common people—that it breathes nothing but bloodshed and slaughter, revenge and fury against all who dissent from it—that it encourages vice and immorality, and is, in every respect, hurtful and destructive to mankind.

FATHER.

And do you not think, that the whore of Babylon, as described in the Revelation of St. John, is exactly and literally fulfilled in the Church of Rome? \*

SON.

I am really surprised at the exactness of the resemblance.

\* That the Church of Rome is the great Mother of Harlots, predicted in the Revelation, is sufficiently proved by a work just published, called, *THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN HISTORICALLY EXPLAINED*; in which the author explains the opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and pouring out the seven vials, by the events which they particularly refer to in the history of the church and the world. This is a work of great learning and labor, and the calculations and historical facts are very exact: it is comprised in one volume octavo, price 4s. in boards, or 5s. neatly bound; and sold by Mr. ALEX. HOGG, in Pater-Noster-Row.

FATHER.

## FATHER.

Let us, then, look upon this idolatrous, anti-christian Church in the light which she deserves; let us oppose her destructive sentiments, and pray for her fall; and let us humbly implore the great King of Zion, the exalted Head of the Church, that he will, by his Holy Spirit, open the eyes of mankind, and preserve them from all idolatry and superstition; and let us earnestly pray, that Christ may be exalted, that his name may be glorified, that his gospel may shine, and his cause flourish in the earth.

F I N I S.



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P A R T II.

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F I N I S.

